

Charter School Frequently Asked Questions by Prospective Teacher

What is a Charter School? Is it a public school?

Yes, a charter school is an independent public schools that are free to be more innovative and are held accountable for improving student achievement. In addition to the flexibility inherent in a school-based organizational structure, charter schools enjoy extra scope to innovate with the curriculum and staff. As a charter school, we are overseen by a Board of Directors elected annually by the parents and school employees. The BOD has responsibilities outlined in the charter and is comprised of parents and community members.

How many “for profit” charter schools are there?

Zero. Public charter schools just like traditional schools or businesses purchase goods and contract for services based on the needs of the organization and the budget. All of SC’s Public Charter Schools must have an independent audit annually and must file 990s with the IRS each year.

Why do we need Public Charter Schools?

- All students deserve opportunities for academic success.
- Public Charter Schools provide new educational opportunities for SC’s future.
- Public Charter Schools are held accountable for improving student achievement.
- Public Charter Schools foster a partnership between parents, teachers and students to create an environment in which parents can be more involved, teachers are given the freedom to innovate and students are provided the structure they need to learn.
- Public Charter schools give parents options when it comes to where to send their child to school.

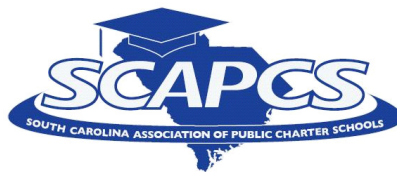
What is innovation?

Public Charter School innovations take place every day from the classroom to the board room. School based decision making from instructional strategies to budgeting creates an all American entrepreneurial spirit in public charter schools where teachers are empowered by their accountability for student achievement and charter school boards allocate resources based on the actual needs of the students in the school.

How many students are in public charter schools in SC? Over 10,000 this year. The South Carolina Public Charter School District is the fastest growing district in the state. There are currently 37 charter schools with 9 scheduled to open this year. Four schools are currently celebrating their 10th year in operation (Greenville Tech, The Meyers Center, Phoenix, and Youth Academy Charter School).

I am National Board Certified, will I still receive that money? NBC teachers will continue to receive their stipends as allowed and budgeted by the State of SC.

Are Public Charter Schools held to the same standards as traditional schools? They are held to higher standards. If charters do not meet their goals and objects their sponsor may revoke their charter. The charter schools operate with a contractual agreement – increased autonomy for increased student achievement.



Do I have to be a certified teacher to apply?

Start-up charter school, 25% of our faculty may be noncertified, however we must still meet the requirements of NCLB for all core academic areas. Charters accept applications from all prospective teachers. Certified personnel may have preference, but we will consider applicants without SC state certification. We may ask non-certified personnel to apply for state certification while they are teaching with us.

Can charter schools hire PACE teachers?

This depends on the individual schools. They are able to as long as they use the state’s teacher evaluation plans.

Do full time teachers & staff qualify for the State’s Retirement and Medical Insurance?

This depends on which charter school you teach at. Please ask the individual schools. Many charter schools do offer these benefits or other similar benefits.

Do the students have to take the state tests?

Yes, students will be taught the state curriculum for each subject and will take the required PACT and/or end of course tests at a minimum; beyond that, the program focuses on students actively engaged in a meaningful, quality curriculum that goes beyond test taking. Charters must meet the requirements of the Federal No Child Left Behind Act, the South Carolina Charter School Act, and the South Carolina Academic Standards.

Isn’t there an entrance exam for students like at the magnet schools? No, entrance exams are not allowed for admission to any Charter School in South Carolina. By law, charter schools must have a fair and open admission process, conducting outreach and recruitment to all segments of the community they serve. There must be no barriers to entrance unless applicants exceed available slots in which case there is a lottery. Public charter schools are nonsectarian and nondiscriminatory in admission and employment practices.

What about special education students?

Public charter schools must follow the same special education laws and requirements that all South Carolina public schools follow. All classes will be inclusive implementing the principles of differentiation with support from special education teachers as required in the student’s IEPs and/or 504s.

