



## Debunking the Myths About Charter Public Schools

by Cara Stillings Candal, Ed.D

### Introduction

Charter public schools have existed in Massachusetts since 1995, after enabling legislation was included in the landmark Massachusetts Education Reform Act (MERA) of 1993. Originally conceived as laboratories for educational innovation<sup>1</sup> that could offer choice for families and competition for traditional district schools, charters are public schools that may not discriminate as to whom they accept. In fact, aside from their often superior levels of academic achievement<sup>2</sup>, charter public schools differ from their district counterparts in only one major way: they enjoy some freedoms and autonomies that district schools do not in exchange for being subject to additional accountability requirements.

In Massachusetts, any group or individual can apply to establish and run a charter public school.<sup>3</sup> Charters are authorized by the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), and if the BESE approves an application for a charter school, the school is established based upon a contract, or charter, which outlines its performance goals and the standards to which it will be held.<sup>4</sup> Once established, all charter public schools in Massachusetts are subject to a review by the authorizer, which takes place at least once every five years. If, during that review, it is found that a charter public school is not meeting the terms of its charter or failing to live up to requirements for academic progress set by the state and federal governments, the authorizer may close the school.<sup>5</sup> These are the additional accountability requirements to which charter public schools are held.

Two types of charter public schools exist in Massachusetts: Commonwealth charter schools, which were established under the MERA in 1993, and Horace Mann charter schools, which were established in 1997. While both types of charter schools are authorized by the Board

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of Elementary and Secondary Education, Horace Mann charter schools remain a part of the local school district in which they are established and are subject to approval by the local school committee and teachers' union, in addition to the BESE, before they may open. Furthermore, Horace Mann schools do not enjoy all of the same freedoms as their Commonwealth counterparts.<sup>6</sup>

Whereas both Commonwealth and Horace Mann charter public schools are free to organize around a particular theme or mission, to determine school budgets, and to extend the school day and year, only Commonwealth charter schools are also allowed the freedom to operate as a single school district and outside of teachers' union contracts and work rules. Because they operate outside of union contracts and work rules, Commonwealth charter schools are also free to hire and fire teachers and other staff.<sup>7</sup>

There are currently 62 charter public schools operating in Massachusetts serving 26,384 students. There are also an additional 24,066 students on charter school waiting lists in Massachusetts, a result of a cap that the state places on the existence of charter schools, both statewide and on a district-by-district basis. The students that attend Massachusetts charter schools come from a range of family and social class backgrounds, but are disproportionately poor and minority compared to state public school averages. Whereas in the state as a whole roughly 31 percent of students are low-income and 23 percent of students are African American and Hispanic, the population of students served by charter schools is roughly 46 percent low-income and 49 percent African American and Hispanic. Charter schools also serve a significant number of students for whom English is not a first language and students with special educational needs.<sup>8</sup>

Since their inception in 1993, charter public schools have been criticized by groups representing the status quo in education. Lobby groups such as the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA), Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC), and Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS) have sought to keep caps

on charter public schools low and even to abolish charter schools altogether.<sup>9</sup> To support this agenda, these lobbyists of the educational status quo and others have propagated a number of harmful myths about charter schools—myths that have sometimes proven hard to dispel in the popular press and with some members of the general public.

Today, perhaps more than ever, it is critical that these myths be dispelled. Unless the current cap<sup>10</sup> on charter schools in Massachusetts is raised, many of the more than 24,000 students on charter school waiting lists will have no choice but to attend the under-performing district schools they seek to escape. Moreover, the federal government is currently offering \$4.35 billion dollars in the form of competitive grants to states that implement charter school-friendly policies and raise existing caps on charter public schools.<sup>11</sup> Governor Deval Patrick has responded to this incentive with a proposal to raise the charter school cap in the state's lowest performing districts.<sup>12</sup>

The following policy brief debunks the 10 most common charter school myths in an attempt to set the record straight about these innovative, high-performing public schools. It is time to separate the reality of charter schooling from the rhetoric so that every Massachusetts student who desires the benefit of a charter public school education has the opportunity to attend the school of his or her choice.

### **Myth #1: Charter Schools Drain Funding from Other Public Schools - *FALSE***

Charter detractors would have the public believe that charter schools drain funding from their district counterparts.<sup>13</sup> Charter public schools may attract students away from other public schools, but they certainly do not drain those schools of funding. In fact, when students leave traditional district schools to attend charters, district schools continue to receive funding for those students even though they are no longer being educated in the district.

Table 1. Example of District Tuition and Chapter 46 Aid

	Enrollment	Tuition Rate	Tuition	Chapter 46 Aid Detail			Total Chapter 46 Aid	Net Tuition Payment	Percentage of Tuition Offset by Aid
				100	60	40			
Year 1	0	9,500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Year 2	10	10,000	100,000	100,000	0	0	100,000	0	100.0
Year 3	5	10,500	52,500	0	60,000	0	60,000	-7,500	114.2
Year 4	6	11,000	66,000	13,500	0	40,000	53,500	12,500	81.0
Year 5	11	11,500	126,500	60,500	8,100	0	68,600	57,900	54.2

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of School Finance, “Understanding Charter School Tuition Reimbursements.” [http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/charter/1\\_tuition.html](http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/charter/1_tuition.html)

Charter public schools are funded according to a formula that considers the per-pupil cost of education.<sup>14</sup> In brief, when a student opts to leave a district school for a charter public school, the state determines how much money it would cost to educate that student in a traditional district school and transfers that amount of money from the sending district’s state local aid payment to the charter school. This formula also considers a student’s background characteristics, which simply means that the charter school receives the same “extra” funding for a student with, for example, special educational needs, that the district school would have received.<sup>15</sup> This formula reflects the reality that schoolchildren and their families may choose where they attend school—school districts do not have a right to schoolchildren, and state money intended for education should follow students, not districts.

Moreover, when the tuition that a district school loses when students choose to enroll in a charter school increases from year to year, the state reimburses the district at a rate of 100 percent in the first year of the increase, 60 percent in the second year of the increase, and 40 percent in the third year of the increase.<sup>16</sup> This reimbursement scheme is known as Chapter 46 Aid, after the law that established the reimbursement formula.

In essence, the reimbursement formula means that for a period of three years, the state is providing districts with money for pupils who are no longer enrolled in district schools. In fact, “the 100 percent reimbursement of the increase in tuition means there is no net cost to the district in the first year they send pupils to a charter school. 100 percent of the tuition is

offset by aid.” Even more, if there is a drop in charter school enrollment from one year to the next, a district may actually receive even more in reimbursement funds than was transferred from its budget to cover the cost of tuition. This is because “the district [would still be eligible] for the 60 percent of the 100 percent of reimbursement from the prior fiscal year.”<sup>17</sup> In this sense, the loss of students to charter schools actually increases district budgets for a period of time; in FY09, district schools received \$50,891,777 in the form of reimbursements for students who chose to attend charter schools.<sup>18</sup>

**Myth #2: Some Local Communities Lose Almost All of Their State Education Funding Because of Charter Schools in Their District - FALSE**

The same critics who propagate the myth that charter schools drain funding and resources from other public schools would also like the public to believe that some local communities lose all of their state education funding to nearby charter public schools. Not only is this a myth because of the per-pupil system that Massachusetts employs to fund charter schools (described above), it is also a myth because the state caps the amount of tuition that a given district can lose to a charter school in a given year.

The state caps the number of charter schools that can operate statewide at 120. It also caps the number of charter schools that can operate in a given district by limiting district spending on charter school tuition to 9 percent of the district’s net school spending.<sup>19</sup> In

effect, it would not be legal or possible for a district to lose all of its state funding to nearby charters.

Also important to recognize is that the state limits the number of Commonwealth charter schools that can operate at a given time to 72. This means that the other 48 charter schools allowed to operate at a given time must be Horace Mann charter schools, or schools that require the approval of the school district in which they are located.<sup>20</sup> Although there have been recent calls by the Obama administration and by Governor Deval Patrick to lift the overall charter school enrollment cap (currently at 4 percent) in the state and to increase the amount of charter school tuition that a district can spend from 9 percent to 18 percent, the comparatively small number of Commonwealth charter schools that are allowed to operate in the state ensures that charter schools provide little competition for districts when it comes to state money.<sup>21</sup>

Although, as the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association points out, some communities that “fund their schools mostly with local money and do not receive much state aid will see a high percentage of their state aid deducted,” such communities are certainly not the norm in Massachusetts.<sup>22</sup> These generally affluent suburban communities are also not where the bulk of charter schools are located. Even these communities will not see all of their state education funding deducted; the amount deducted will only be equal to the amount that it would cost to educate charter school students in the traditional public setting.

### **Myth #3: It Costs the State of Massachusetts about 25 Percent More to Educate a Student in a Charter School than in a Local District School - FALSE**

When the state estimates how much money it will cost to educate a student entering a charter school, it does so based upon a formula that calculates the cost of educating that student in the traditional district

where he or she lives.<sup>23</sup> The only additional cost is the reimbursement school districts receive after students transfer from a traditional district to a charter public school—this is an overall cost to the state but a boon for districts.

Of course, the state funding formula does not guarantee that the actual amount of money that charter schools receive equals that which traditional districts would receive to educate the same students. According to a recent Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) analysis, charters currently receive “only 78 percent of what districts spend.” Indeed, when district reimbursements for students who transfer to charters are accounted for, “charters actually cost districts \$7,287 per pupil—only 58.5 percent of what they spend to educate a student.”<sup>24</sup> It is clear that the per-pupil cost to the state to educate charter school students is less than the cost of educating those students in traditional public schools. Any additional cost the state incurs in relation to charters derives from the generous reimbursements that traditional districts receive when charter school enrollment rates increase from year to year.

Moreover, charter public schools receive only a small, per-pupil grant from the state, which covers, on average, about 12 percent of overall construction and renovation costs. Charters “are not eligible to receive state subsidies from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA),” which finances 40-80 percent of school construction and renovation costs in districts.<sup>25</sup> Most charter schools in Massachusetts use private grants and fundraising to cover their capital and other costs.

Even with less state funding, most charter public schools produce better achievement outcomes for students. In 2009, six of the 10 top school districts on the 10th grade English language arts MCAS, and four of the top ten 10 school districts on 10th grade math MCAS were charter schools (charter schools also took the three top spots on 10th grade math).<sup>26</sup> These data clearly show that many charter schools do more with less.

**Myth #4: It Costs the State Nearly \$200 Million to Fund Charter Schools - FALSE**

The vast majority of funds that charter public schools receive follow students from the district schools that they would have attended to the charter public schools of their choice. Other than this redirection of existing expenditures, charter schools cost the state comparatively little additional money.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), almost \$260 million followed students from traditional public schools to charter schools in FY09. This is money taken from state local aid payments to districts, and it does not affect traditional district schools because they are no longer educating the students for whom those funds were allocated.<sup>27</sup>

Other payments that the state made directly to charter public schools in FY09 totaled nearly \$21 million to help those schools cover a portion of their facilities costs and just over \$5 million to cover the cost of ensuring that siblings of charter public school students had access to the same charter school as their brothers or sisters.<sup>28</sup>

Importantly, in the same year, the state reimbursed district schools almost \$51 million for students who had been lost to charters. This is money that districts received for students that they were no longer educating. Thus, when we consider the total cost of

funding charter schools, the reality is that, excluding tuition payments that are assigned to pupils and not to schools, in FY09 the state of Massachusetts spent around \$77 million dollars in costs related to charters, but the vast majority of those funds went to district schools, not to charter public schools, in the form of reimbursements for students who had been lost to charters.<sup>29</sup>

**Myth #5: Academic Studies Have Shown That Charter Schools Do Not Outperform School Districts - FALSE**

Time and again, academic studies show that Massachusetts charter schools outperform their school district counterparts. Two highly regarded recent studies show very favorable student outcomes for charter public schools in Massachusetts. Moreover, data recently released by the Massachusetts DESE show that many charters top the state’s list of schools that add great value to the education of low-income students.

A 2006 study by the DESE made a “direct comparison of Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) results in English language arts and mathematics for individual charter schools and their comparison sending districts (CSD).” The study also conducted a “value-added analysis to examine growth in MCAS scores over time for students continuously enrolled in charter schools and their

Table 2. Fiscal Year 2009 Commonwealth Charter School Profile	
<b>Local Aid to Charter Schools</b>	
Number of Sending Districts	251
Average Charter Tuition Rate	11,337
Local Payment <sup>30</sup>	259,825,979
<b>State Aid to Charter Schools</b>	
State Payment for Priv/Home/Sib	5,222,678
Chapter 46 Reimbursements (reimbursements to sending districts)	50,891,777
Facilities Aid	20,823,510
Total State Aid to Charter Schools FY09 (including reimbursements to sending districts)	76,937,965
State Aid to Charter Schools (excluding reimbursements to sending districts)	26,046,188

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Commonwealth Charter School Profile, FY00-09, [http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/charter/1\\_tuition.html](http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/charter/1_tuition.html)

CSD.” The study found that in most years between 2001 and 2005, students in 40 to 50 percent of the charter schools in Massachusetts outperformed their peers in district schools on MCAS. Moreover, MCAS results were even more favorable for African American and Hispanic students enrolled in charter schools. Between 2001 and 2005 in both English language arts and mathematics, African American and Hispanic subgroups in charter schools performed significantly better on MCAS than their counterparts in district schools.<sup>31</sup>

Even considering these impressive numbers, some charter school critics continue to argue that the results of studies such as the one conducted by DESE are not valid because they don’t account for the fact that some charter school students may be more motivated than their peers in district schools. After all, these critics point out, charter school students have to apply for a seat in charter schools, which is a display of motivation.

In response to this claim, a 2009 study conducted by Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) researchers for The Boston Foundation compared the MCAS performance of Boston students who applied to charter schools and won the charter school lottery to those who applied to charter schools but did not win the lottery and went on to enroll in the Boston Public Schools. Taking this “apples-to-apples” approach, The Boston

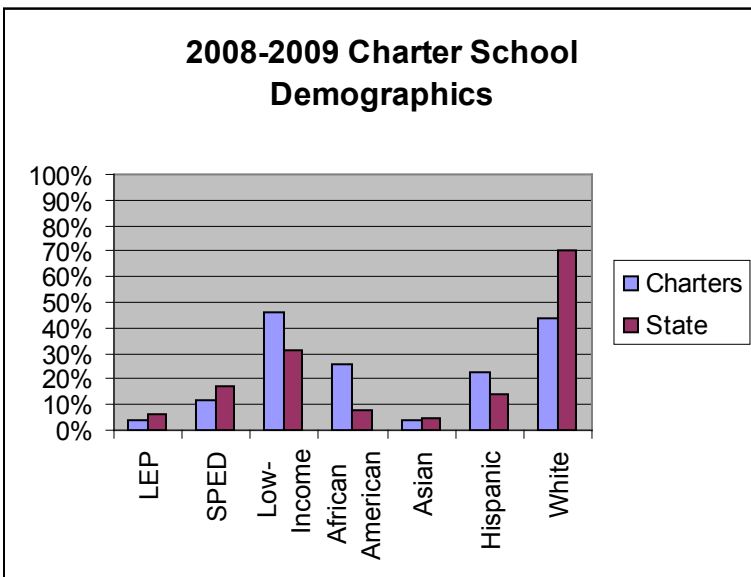
Foundation still found “large and positive effects for charter schools, at both the middle and high school levels.” Additionally, the study found that the estimated impact of charter middle schools in the Boston area is especially large. Charter middle schools in Boston increase student performance by .5 standard deviations. According to the authors of the study, “this is the same as moving from the 50th to the 69th percentile in student performance,” a difference which is “*roughly half the size of the black white achievement gap*” (emphasis added).<sup>32</sup>

In October of 2009 the impressive results that both of these studies show for charters were bolstered by DESE data showing that a number of Massachusetts charter schools help low-income students perform on MCAS at rates “equal to or greater than” their peers in the state. Of 13 schools listed as having high growth for low-income students on both the 2008 and 2009 MCAS examinations, 6 were charter public schools.<sup>33</sup>

**Myth # 6: Charter Schools Are Doing Better Academically Because They Cream All of the Best Kids and Send Troubled and Failing Kids Back to District Schools - FALSE**

Many charter public schools do outperform their district counterparts academically, but this performance is not the result of creaming the best students or sending the poorest-performing students back to district schools. As public schools, charters cannot discriminate as to whom they accept. In the likely event that more students apply to attend a charter public school than there are seats available, charter public schools in Massachusetts hold lotteries to admit students, which ensures that student selection is random.<sup>34</sup>

The students most likely to apply to charter schools are those from groups that have been poorly served by the traditional district system. Compared to public school students statewide, charter schools serve



Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, “Charter School Fact Sheet.”

disproportionate numbers of African American, Hispanic, and low-income students—all of these groups achieve better academic outcomes in charter schools than they do in district schools.<sup>35</sup>

Recently, charter public school critics such as the Massachusetts Teachers Association have attempted to dismiss the excellent results that many charter public schools in Massachusetts achieve by suggesting that charter schools “establish enrollment and exclusion practices that winnow out students with greater needs.”<sup>36</sup>

Not only are claims of creaming untrue, as shown by the data above, claims of “pushout” are likewise false. This is especially evident when one considers that the attrition, or mobility, rates in charters are generally lower than in districts where choice is available to parents and students. Although comprehensive statewide district student attrition data are not available, a 2006 report by the Center for Collaborative Education (CCE) suggests that average attrition rates in Boston Public Schools are between 22 and 24 percent.<sup>37</sup> These are higher than attrition rate estimates for many charter public schools, especially those in the Boston area, which a recent MTA report identified with regard to claims of “pushout.”<sup>38</sup>

It is also important to consider that students who choose to leave charter public schools (usually to transfer back to district schools) take with them the benefit of a charter school education, which is often more rigorous than that which they receive in the traditional public system. Because of charter schools’ academic rigor (which is a common reason that students give, anecdotally, for leaving), students who transfer out of charter schools are less likely to drop out of school altogether.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, dropout rates are also lower for students who choose to remain in charter schools.

When disaggregated, the data show that charter public schools have dropout rates that are comparable to or lower than their district counterparts. Schools such as MATCH Charter Public and Academy of the Pacific Rim actually report dropout rates of zero,

compared to the 7.6 percent dropout rate reported by the Boston Public Schools.<sup>40</sup>

### **Myth # 7: Lifting the Existing Limit and Creating More Charter Schools Will Mean Higher Property Taxes for Most People—Just to Serve a Small, Elite Group of Students - FALSE**

When the state calculates the cost of educating a charter school student, it does so by considering how much a traditional district would spend to educate that student from all funding sources, including the property tax. However, the actual funding that charters receive is state funding, which comes in the form of tuition payments transferred from a district’s local aid payments to charter schools. The loss of some local aid funding to charter schools does not result in a property tax increase for communities for two reasons: First, the tuition payments that district schools make to charter schools are for pupils no longer being educated in the district; those payments represent only what the district would spend to educate each student who leaves the district for a charter public school.<sup>41</sup> Second, districts receive a generous reimbursement from the state to soften the blow of losing some state aid to charter schools.<sup>42</sup> These reimbursements mean that districts receive money, for a period of three years, for students who are no longer attending district schools.

Raising the cap on the number of charter schools permitted to operate statewide or within districts will in no way affect property taxes for local communities. Governor Deval Patrick’s current proposal to raise the charter school cap would increase the number of charters that can exist in the “state’s high need communities” by increasing “the amount of [state] money that can flow to charters...from 9 to 18 percent” of net district school spending.<sup>43</sup>

If anything, raising the cap on the number of charter schools that are permitted to operate in high need districts will be a boon for local communities and for

the more than 24,000 Massachusetts students who are currently on charter school waiting lists.<sup>44</sup>

**Myth # 8: Lifting the Limit on Charter Schools Will Cause School Closings and Bigger Class Sizes in the Schools that Remain - *FALSE***

The three years of reimbursements that districts receive when they lose students to charter schools are in place specifically to soften the initial blow some districts feel when they see a decrease in enrollment. The state provides this additional funding to ensure that district schools have a reasonable period of time to adjust budgets and staffing and to prevent them from taking drastic and unnecessary measures, such as establishing larger class sizes or closing.<sup>45</sup>

It is also important to note that some districts actually work to actively decrease class sizes after losing students to charter public schools. This is, in part, because those schools want to stay competitive with their charter counterparts. Boston's pilot schools, launched in 1995 as a district response to charter public schools, boast smaller class sizes than their BPS peers, and many have achieved strong academic results—though not as strong as results achieved by charters in recent years.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, national studies show that proximity to charter schools actually causes many district schools to “make greater academic progress.”<sup>47</sup> Theoretically, district schools that lose students to charters implement beneficial reforms, such as smaller class sizes and individualized instruction, which ultimately help students to achieve at higher levels. Thus, instead of causing them to cut programming or close down, it seems that charter public schools actually spur many district schools on to implement positive changes for students.

**Myth # 9: Lifting the Limit on Charter Schools Will Result in Cuts to Programs Such As Sports, As Well As the Layoff of Teachers, Police and Fire Department Personnel - *FALSE***

Lifting the current limit on charter schools would not fundamentally change the way charter schools are funded. If the Governor's current proposal is passed, some districts would see the amount of local aid that can be transferred to charter schools increase from 9 percent to 18 percent of total district spending.<sup>48</sup>

However, the local aid payments from which charter school tuition is deducted does not and never has funded sports programs, teachers' salaries, or municipal services, such as police and fire personnel. Such programming is largely tied to local property taxes, which are in no way impacted by the establishment of charter schools. Furthermore, while municipal services such as police and fire departments do benefit from state local aid payments, that money is separate from Chapter 70 funding, which is used solely to help public school districts. When students transfer to charter schools, charter tuition is paid out of Chapter 70 funds.

**Myth # 10: Charter Schools Serve Only 2 Percent of All Students in Massachusetts—We Should Be Focusing On Issues Affecting the Other 98 Percent of Our Students - *FALSE***

Charter schools serve a comparatively small number of students in Massachusetts, but the more than 24,000 students currently on charter school waiting lists is proof that they are in demand.<sup>49</sup> Were current charter school caps raised, charter public schools would serve much more of Massachusetts' student population. Parents and students, especially in the state's lowest performing districts, believe in charter public schools and know they can provide students

with a high quality of education. This is evident in the thousands “of parents—mostly low-income African Americans and Latinos—who vie to enroll their children through lotter[ies] every year”.<sup>50</sup> It is wrong to tell these parents that they may not send their children to a school of their choice.

If anything, raising the cap on charter schools could result in an increased focus on the issues that affect all students in the state, not just charter school students. This is because, according to current Commissioner of Education Mitchell Chester, “over the last 15 years, many Massachusetts charter schools have become nationally-recognized for their superior academic achievement and innovative educational methods.”<sup>51</sup> As leaders in education reform, existing charters have served as positive examples for schools statewide; they have even forced some district schools to make positive changes for students who opt not to attend charters. The expanded learning time and small class size initiatives seen in many Boston pilot and other public schools are examples of this, as are school-based management practices that have been adopted in some Massachusetts cities and towns, such as Barnstable.<sup>52</sup>

Faith in charter schools’ ability to effect change can be seen on both the state and federal levels. Governor Deval Patrick and the Obama administration have crafted proposals to lift charter school caps and to replicate the kinds of programs that have been successful in charter schools in recent years.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, the federal Race to the Top fund will distribute \$4.35 billion dollars to states in the form of competitive grants. Receipt of these grants is contingent upon states embracing certain reforms that, in the words of United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, understand that “maintaining the status quo in our country is unacceptable;” in the eyes of the Obama administration, the expansion of successful charter schools and the replication of innovations born in charter schools, such as extended school days and years and mandatory after school tutoring, is one important way to challenge the status quo.<sup>54</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The dialogue surrounding charter public schools in Massachusetts has been stalled for some time. Indeed, many of the criticisms offered by charter opponents today are the same ones offered when charter public schools were established in the state in 1993. These criticisms, especially with regard to charter public school funding and student achievement, have been proven false time and again.

The 10 charter school myths outlined above must be debunked once and for all.

Charter schools are an immensely successful educational innovation. Charter public schools in Massachusetts are fairly funded, accountable for outcomes, and outperform their district school counterparts on measures of student achievement. Moreover, they cause no harm to district schools or to school district budgets and operations.

In fact, it is becoming increasingly clear that the existence of charter public schools is in many ways a boon to their district counterparts. The success that so many charter public schools experience proves that schools can make a difference in the lives of even the most disadvantaged students. Charter public schools encourage and even shame district schools into making the changes necessary to better serve all students.

Massachusetts is entering a new era of education reform, and in this era it can no longer afford to ignore the great successes of charter public schools. Considering the large amount of federal funding now available to expand the charter school movement, a failure to raise the cap on charter public schools could result in the loss of \$250 million in federal education funding, the majority of which would go to district schools.<sup>55</sup> More importantly, however, a failure to raise the cap would result in an unforgivable loss of educational opportunity for the more than 24,000 students statewide who sit on charter school waiting lists. In the coming years, this number will undoubtedly grow. Ignoring the great demand for charter schools in Massachusetts would mean giving in to special interest groups at the expense

of thousands of underserved students, and this is unacceptable.

As debate about raising the cap on charter schools continues, it is important that charter school advocates work hard to inform the public not only about the great benefits of charter public schools but also about the great demand that currently exists for them, especially in underserved communities. Along with the success stories of countless charter school students, truthful, research-based information about the success of charter schools should be charter advocates' greatest ally in their fight to raise the cap.

### Endnotes

1. Shanker, Albert, *Restructuring Our Schools*, Peabody Journal of Education, 65(3), p. 98.
2. See: Hoxby, Caroline, "Achievement in Charter Schools and Regular Public Schools in the United States: Understanding the Differences, Harvard University Program on Education Policy and Governance" working paper, December 2004; Hoxby, Caroline, "Achievement in Charter Schools and Regular Public Schools in the United States: Understanding the Differences," Harvard University Program on Education Policy and Governance working paper, December 2004; and The Boston Foundation, *Informing the Debate, Comparing Boston's Charter, Pilot, and Traditional Schools*, January 2009.
3. The law prevents charters from being granted to private education management companies, although boards of directors can contract school operations to private companies, see MERA, 1993.
4. The State of Massachusetts is known as a single authorizer system, and the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education is the only body recognized as legally competent to authorize charter schools.
5. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Charter School Questions and Answers, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/about.html>
6. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Charter School Questions and Answers, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/about.html>
7. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Charter School Questions and Answers, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/about.html>.
8. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Charter School Fact Sheet, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/about.html>.
9. See Gunderson, Matt, "Superintendents Contest Charter School Funding," *The Boston Globe*, June 9, 2005; Massachusetts Teachers Association, Charter School Success, or Effective Out-Migration of Low-Achievers?, 2009, p. 1, downloaded October 13, 2009 from [http://bostonherald.com/news/document.bg?f=misc/Charter\\_School\\_REPORT](http://bostonherald.com/news/document.bg?f=misc/Charter_School_REPORT)
10. Currently, state law allows for a total of 90 Commonwealth and 60 Horace Mann Charter Schools. The state also caps the amount that a given district can pay in charter school tuition to 9 percent of the district's net school spending. The implications of this funding formula will be discussed below.
11. See: Duncan, Arne, "Education Reform's Moon Shot", *The Washington Post*, July 24, 2009
12. Vaznis, James, "Patrick Wants More Charter Schools," *The Boston Globe*, July 16, 2009, downloaded October, 1, 2009 from [www.boston.com](http://www.boston.com).
13. See: Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, Beyond Discord: Resolving The Tensions between Charter and Public Schools, May 2005, <http://www.massupt.org/CurrentNews/drilldown>
14. Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 70, Section 89.
15. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, "About Charter Schools", <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/about.html>

16. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, "School Finance: Charter Schools, Reimbursement of Charter School Tuition," [http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/charter/charter\\_tuition.html](http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/charter/charter_tuition.html)
17. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of School Finance, "Understanding Charter School Tuition Reimbursements." [http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/charter/1\\_tuition.html](http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/charter/1_tuition.html)
18. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Commonwealth Charter School Profile, FY00-09, [http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/charter/1\\_tuition.html](http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/charter/1_tuition.html)
19. Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 70, Section 89.
20. Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 70, Section 89.
21. See: Sager, Ryan, "Obama's Charter School Challenge," *New York Post*, March 24, 2009. See also, Vaznis, James, "Charter Schools Score in Budget," *The Boston Globe*, January 28, 2009.
22. Massachusetts Charter Public School Association, Myths/Realities about Massachusetts Charter Public Schools, Charter Public School Financing.
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