

**For More Information on Charter Schools
in the United States:**

U.S. Charter Schools Website – www.uscharterschools.org
National Alliance for Public Charter Schools – www.publiccharters.org
National Assoc. of Charter School Authorizers – www.qualitycharters.org
The Center for Education Reform – www.edreform.com/charters.html
Education Evolving – www.educationevolving.org
Center for School Change – www.centerforschoolchange.org
National Charter School Research Project – www.crpe.org/cs/crpe/view/topics/1



Maine Association *for* Charter Schools

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public
and
free

**Expanding
Public Education
Options *with*
Public Charter
Schools**

macs



Maine Association *for* Charter Schools

Why Expand Public Education Options?

Why?

Today Maine's children come to school with an increasing variety of educational needs—a major challenge to our traditional public education system.

In the world of these children, different skills, attitudes, and academic preparation are required for them to succeed, compared to past economic eras dominated by fishing, farming, forestry, and factories.

Today one of every four Maine children drops out of school, 4 per school hour, 3,800 per year. As a class, their lifetime earning loss could be \$1 billion. (MCEE, 2010)

Today one of every three Maine high school graduates who enrolls in college drops out before their second year. The lifetime earning loss of each of these students will be between \$400-\$660,000. (MCEE, 2010)

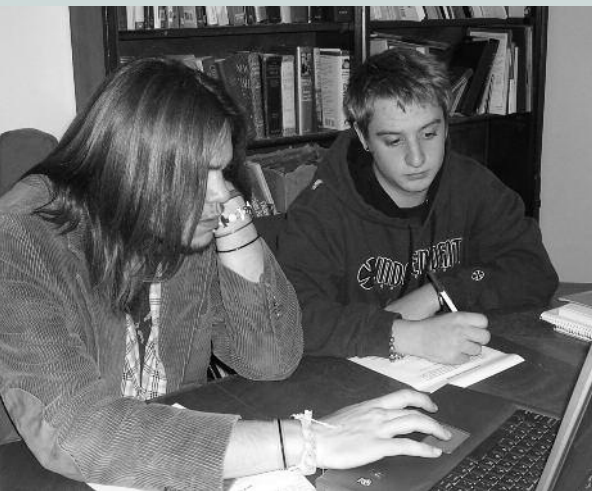
Charter schools are the most effective, proven tool to stem this costly ebb tide in education.

Why are there no charter schools in Maine?

Today there are 5,000 charter schools in 40 states, enrolling over 1.6 million children. Waiting lists are over 700,000.

Charter Schools embody the values of public education—open to all children, regardless of parent income, and non-religious. They represent America's democratic ideals—choice, freedom, accountability, innovation, and competition.

Maine children cannot choose to attend a charter school. The Maine Legislature has repeatedly failed to pass a law allowing even a pilot program of charter schools in Maine.



“Maine can ill afford to neglect the potential of these disconnected youth to be productive members of the workforce ... Efforts that target students who are at risk of dropping out of school are becoming more essential to Maine's future economic success.”

John Dorrer, Director, Division of Labor Market Information Services

What are Charter Schools?

Charter schools are public schools.

- They offer a choice to parents, students, teachers, and administrators.
- They are granted a contract which gives them increased program and operating flexibility.
- They are held strictly accountable for the success of their students.

Charter schools are:

Open to all students, tuition free

Small, non-profit, non-religious organizations

Defined by their charter—theme, curriculum, instruction, grades, schedule, operation, administration, etc.

Overseen by a state-approved charter Authorizing Agency (local school board or University)

Accountable to their students and parents through choice

Accountable to an Authorizing Agency (meeting academic & financial goals)

Accountable through state-wide assessments

Closed for violating charter provisions

Closed for failing to recruit or retain enough students



Charter schools are affordable public options for all children. How long can Maine afford to resist the power & potential of public charter schools?

Why Maine Needs Charter Schools (and other education options).

Education Factors in Maine

- Increase in high school dropout rate
- Increase in college dropout rate
- Increase in children attending private schools & home schools
- Increase in children choosing adult ed. & GED programs
- Increase in cost/student (cf Consumer Price Index)
- Increase in children in special education
- Increase in suspensions & expulsions
- Increase in remedial training by businesses
- Increase in remedial courses by colleges
- Low student achievement—fewer than ½ of students in any grade level meet Maine math standards
- Little or no improvement in statewide average on Maine achievement tests

Other Factors in Maine

- Increase in number of children in poverty
- Increase in number of children with mental health problems
- Increase in drug & alcohol abuse (except tobacco)
- Increase in incarcerated children
- Increase in low-wage service jobs
- Increase in jobs requiring higher level skills & education
- Increase in young adults leaving Maine

21st Century Challenges

Maine Pays the High Cost of Failing to Meet These 21st Century Challenges!

New public education options like charter schools will help Maine increase its number of high school graduates, improve the skills of those graduates, and improve their success rate in higher education and in the workforce.

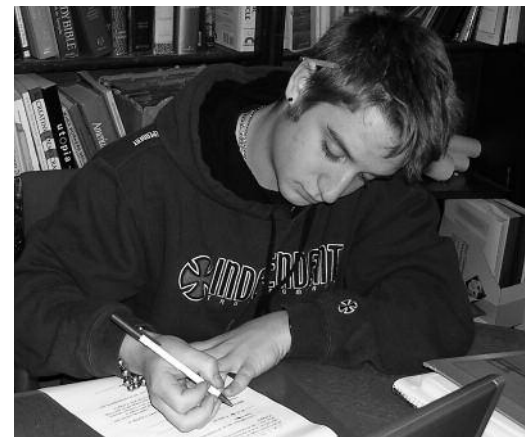
The cost of dropouts now adds significantly to Maine's social and economic costs. The loss of lifetime productivity of one adult without a high school diploma is valued in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Without this diploma, a young person has an 8 times greater chance of going to jail, and the cost of one incarcerated youth in Maine is \$100-120,000 per year.

New public education options like charter schools will benefit Maine's economy by encouraging a more highly-skilled workforce, making Maine more attractive to businesses requiring highly-skilled employees. More quality job opportunities will also keep more of Maine youth in Maine!

An email sent to MACS in March, 2010, just past midnight:

"Hello,

I'm not sure if i have the right email, but I am looking for a way to get into the Carleton Project. I live in Fort Fairfield, Maine and am having a lot of trouble in my school. So, I was wondering if you could help me out. I really need a second option. Because I do want to finish school, I just can't do it where I live. So if you could help that would be great. Please get back to me as soon as you can. Thank you."*



*If there were charter schools in Maine, The Carleton Project would look very much like one. With a waiting list since it opened in Presque Isle in 1999, the school began an outreach program in Houlton in 2006 and Bangor in 2009. The Carleton Project successfully serves these communities, addressing the educational needs of a population of young people who have not been successful in traditional settings.

Charter Schools Can Help Maine Meet 21st Century Challenges

Charter schools can help people:

- Provide a variety of innovative public education programs to meet the growing diversity of children's needs, so all children may achieve success.
- Allow students and parents a choice of programs, without labeling children as **special** or **at-risk** or programs as **alternative**.
- Promote parental involvement in their children's education pre-K through high school.
- Provide innovative teachers and administrators new professional opportunities.



Charter schools can help communities:

- Provide a shrinking community a new, sustainable option to maintain a small school at a reasonable cost.
- Provide a growing community a new option to secure and maintain new education programs.
- Provide all communities a new option to oversee public education programs and control costs.

Charter schools can help colleges reduce their need to provide remedial courses.

Charter schools can help businesses reduce remedial training.

Charter schools can help the traditional public education system:

- Share new instructional and programming approaches to helping all children achieve success.
- Collaborate in regional alternative education, vocational, and other special programs.
- Model new forms of accountability (parental choice, fiscal audits, annual reports, contract renewal reviews).
- Acquire new financial resources—federal grants, foundation grants, business partnerships, community collaborations.
- Access new technical and professional support from the growing state and national network of charter schools, authorizing agencies, and education improvement organizations.

Envision Charter Schools in Maine...

Public charter schools will

- Provide new opportunities to educate more children to a high level of personal growth and academic achievement.
- Provide new affordable options to students, parents, teachers, and administrators, regardless of where they live or their level of income.
- Contribute to the quality of all education programs in Maine.
- Create and sustain affordable, innovative, high-quality educational programs within the legal framework of a strong, enabling charter school law.



Our Choices Affect All of Our Lives

**Have you been able to make personal choices
where you live?
where you went to school?**

**How would you feel if you had no choice?
you were told where to live?
you were told where to go to school?**

**We hope you see
the need to increase public school choice,
the potential of charter schools to improve
public education for all Maine children.**

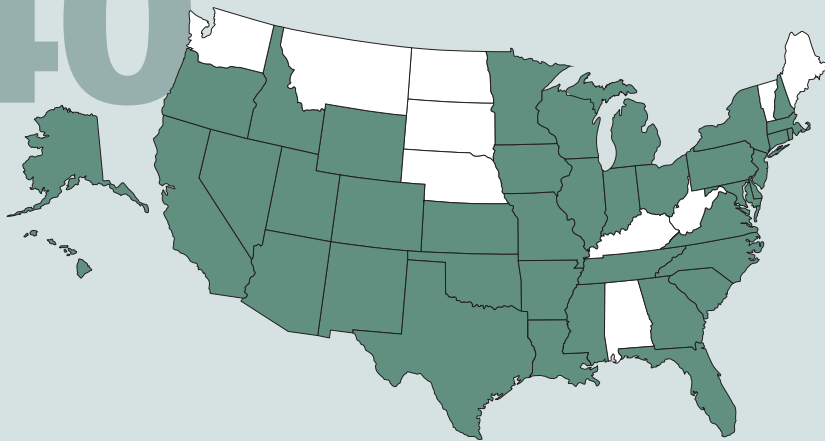
No choice breeds hopelessness!

Charter Schools—

A Powerful, Growing Force for Public School Improvement

40

States With Charter Schools



Maine is missing out!

Since 1991, 40 states and the District of Columbia have adopted into law charter school legislation:

Alaska, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, North Carolina, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming

States in which a charter school law has not been passed include:

Alabama, Kentucky, Maine, Montana, North Dakota, Nebraska, South Dakota, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia

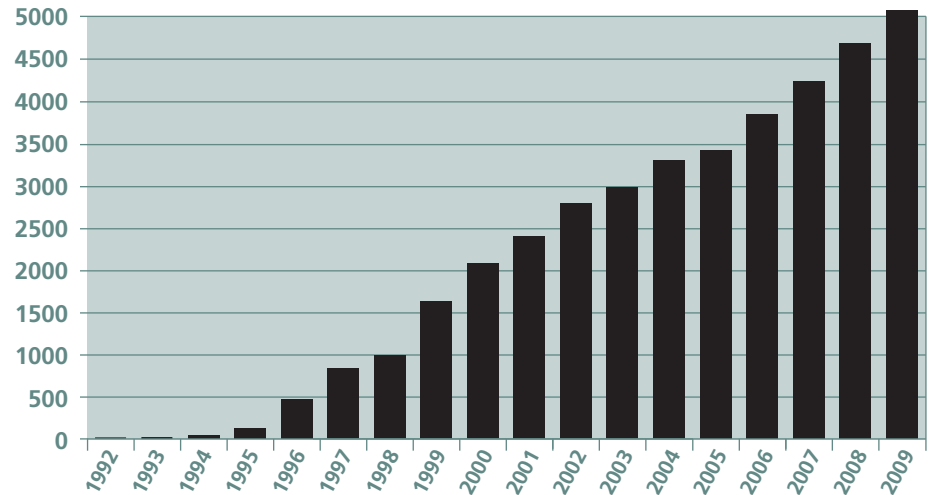


Charter Schools Are Expanding Public Education!

Expanding

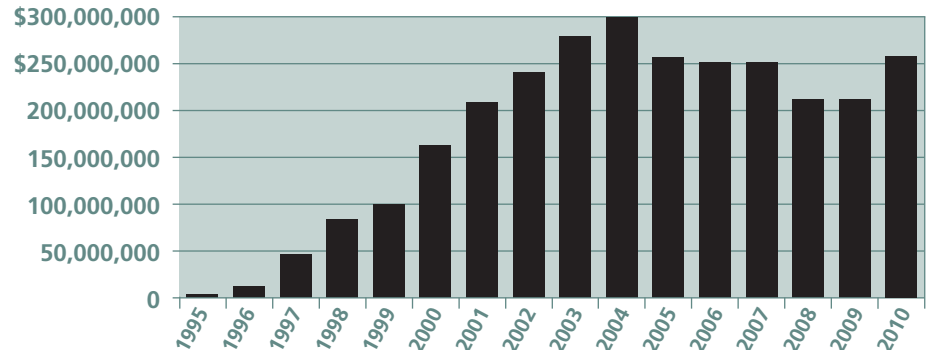
Growth of Public Charter Schools

Number of Schools



Bi-Partisan Congressional Support

Appropriations



OUR MISSION: to Bring Public Charter Schools (and other public education options) to Maine

Maine Association for Charter Schools (MACS) is a statewide group of individuals, educators, students, parents, business people, and policymakers—concerned stakeholders dedicated to supporting the creation, growth, and sustainability of high-quality public school options in Maine. MACS is a 501-c-3 organization.

Since 1993, MACS has facilitated in-depth discussion with policymakers in Augusta about the critical need to allow entrepreneurial educators to create innovative public school programs to benefit all Maine children. MACS has drafted and proposed enabling charter school legislation in each legislative session that reflects lessons learned from the charter school movement as it has grown and matured in other states.

Many teachers, students, parents, principals, and superintendents have testified passionately about the need to expand public school options. However, strong opposition from traditional state and national education associations has maintained the status quo. MACS continues its quest to achieve affordable public school options for children in Maine.

MACS staff and supporters work to educate the people of Maine about the potential of public charter schools to meet the needs of Maine students in the 21st century. We make frequent presentations to individuals and groups, publicize new research, publish informational handouts, maintain an extensive website, and communicate with stakeholders via newsletters and social network forums. We hold educational forums in collaboration with the Maine Department of Education and other organizations, bringing to Maine nationally recognized charter school leaders.

MACS collaborates with the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, represents Maine in the national Charter School State Leaders Association, and works with other state and national organizations in promoting quality and affordable public school choice for all students and parents.

When Maine does allow public charter schools and other public school options, MACS will help potential organizers and authorizers understand and implement the process of creating new charter schools, or converting existing district schools. MACS will provide independent state-wide monitoring of Maine's charter school program and assure an independent voice to insure Maine's charter schools are consistently high-quality opportunities for Maine students.

We appreciate your interest, and would welcome your personal involvement in our work.

Can you help by...

Advocating for charter schools in local, regional, and/or statewide settings?

Participating on our Board of Directors, our Advisory Board, or as a project coordinator or liaison to other organizations with similar goals?

Sponsoring events such as in-state workshops for potential charter schools authorizers and organizers, state-wide charter school conferences, or Maine's participation in national workshops and conferences?

Contributing financially to our organization to help us build the capacity to be as effective as possible in carrying out our mission?

Contributions to **MACS**

Helping MACS develop a high-quality charter school movement in Maine will be a generous gift to families, friends, and neighbors—benefiting Maine children, helping them prepare for the challenging future.

It will also be a long-lasting gift in support of the educational, social, and economic health of Maine communities.

Our Immediate Goal - to match an existing grant of \$5,000 per month for four months.

Our Annual Target - \$100,000 per year for capacity building and operational expense.

We are grateful for gifts of all sizes:

- \$10,000 and over
- \$2,500 to \$10,000
- \$1,000 to \$2,500
- \$250 to \$1,000
- \$1 to \$250



Thank you for considering a contribution to the Maine Association for Charter Schools.

Please let us know if you have questions or would like more information.

For More Information on Charter Schools, please visit our website www.mainecharterschools.org