

About MACS

Maine Association for Charter Schools (MACS) is a statewide non-profit (501-c-3) organization 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.

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.

Since 1993, MACS has supported charter school legislation in each legislative session that reflects lessons learned from the charter school movement as it has grown and matured in 40 other states.

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 promoting quality and affordable public school choice for all students and parents.

MACS' Mission

To improve opportunities for Maine students to achieve educational success, by promoting innovative public school options – such as charter schools – that provide affordable, high-quality choices to best meet individual learning needs.

MACS' Vision

We envision an expanded system of public education in Maine, able to respond effectively to widely varying educational, social, and economic needs of all children.

We see families empowered to choose the public school option best suited for their children to experience the joy of learning and to realize their full potential.

We see experienced educators re-discovering their passion for teaching in new programs that afford them the support and the freedom to help every student succeed.

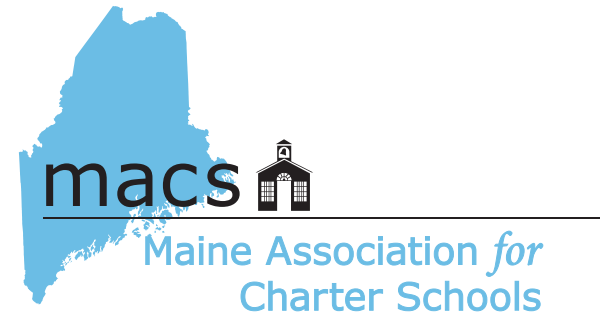
We see new forms of public school programs tailored to the unique needs of our communities serving as powerful engines of new and sustainable economic growth.

MACS' Call to Action

Here is how you can help!

- ✓ Talk to your local legislator about supporting charter school legislation
- ✓ Stay informed by subscribing to MACS' newsletters, updates, and alerts
- ✓ Participate in educational forums
- ✓ Host local events to inform your friends and neighbors
- ✓ Make a tax-deductible donation to support public charter schools in Maine

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Improving Student Success with Public Charter School Options

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Why we need Public School Options

Today, Maine's children arrive at school with an increasing variety of educational needs – a major challenge to our traditional public education system.

To compete and succeed in the global economy of the 21st century, our students need different knowledge, skills, and attitudes than past generations. Then, young people did not need a high level of schooling to succeed in a job in fishing, farming, forestry, a factory, or a mill.

Today, when children need more schooling,

- One of every four Maine children drops out of school - 3,800 in one year!
- One of every three H.S. graduates in Maine, who continues to college, drops out before their second year!

The social & economic costs are **Staggering**

A school dropout in Maine:

- Faces low self esteem, low aspirations, unemployment, reduced earnings, & poverty.
- Is likely to engage in risky behaviors leading to drug & alcohol abuse, poor health, teen pregnancy, & crime.
- Is eight times more likely to be jailed (One jailed youth can cost Maine \$120,000/year).
- Is likely to earn \$250,000 less in their lifetime

Maine people pay dearly for related social services, lost tax revenue, and the lost potential of our youth!

Today, in Maine and across America, the traditional public education system has been unable to prevent the downward spiraling cycle of school dropouts.

Public charter schools, however, offer a new choice to students, parents, teachers, and administrators – public charter schools offer hope.

A “charter” is a contract.

In exchange for flexibility in how a charter school is organized and operated, each charter school contracts to achieve specific results and is legally responsible for meeting its goals.

Charter Schools are

- ✓ Public schools (Not private & with no religious affiliation)
- ✓ Open to all students (no admissions test)
- ✓ Free to all students (no tuition)
- ✓ Independent in program & operations
- ✓ Accountable by contract for student learning & financial responsibility

Charter Schools create new education **Options**

Maine's traditional education system limits the choices parents have to find the most appropriate education for their children.

In most Maine towns, children are assigned to a school based on where they live, whether or not the school is able to address the child's individual needs.

A public charter school is created when parents, teachers, administrators, and community members believe there is a need for a new and different public education option.

Charter school founders must form a non-profit organization and undertake an extensive

process to obtain a “charter” from a state-approved “authorizing agency” (typically an existing school board or a college/university).

A school's charter details how the school will operate and what the school promises to achieve in terms of student learning. It must attract enough students to its vision of education to be viable financially. Funds allocated for each child's education now follows that child to the public school of their choice.

Public Charter Schools = **Hope**

Today, children who are struggling in a school have limited legal options: either continue to endure or drop out when they are old enough (unless their parents can afford to move, provide homeschooling, or pay tuition to a private school).

New public charter schools can provide a variety of innovative programs to meet the diverse needs of children, without their being labeled as “special”, at-risk”, or needing “alternative” programs.

Charter schools are typically small and promote close parent and community involvement in the education of children, kindergarten to high school.

Our **Status** in Maine

Maine does not yet permit public charter schools.

National **Success**

Since 1991, 40 states have passed charter school legislation. Approximately 5,000 charter schools now serve 1.6 million students nationwide. Democrats, Republicans and Independents alike support charter schools. **Do you?**

For more information, please visit:
www.mainecharterschools.org