


2019-2020



WHAT IS A PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL?

FOR STUDENTS, FAMILIES,
EDUCATORS, AND EVERYONE WHO
BELIEVES IN ACCESS TO QUALITY
SCHOOLS

PREPARED BY
FAMILIES IN ACTION FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

WHAT IS A PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL?

Let's get the facts straight

*LIKE TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS,
CHARTERS ARE:*

Free and part of the public school system

Open to all students

*Funded primarily through federal, state,
and local tax dollars*

*Held to state and federal academic
standards*

WHAT IS A CHARTER SCHOOL?

Charter schools are **tuition-free public schools** and **enrollment is open to all students**. They are independently operated public schools that operate with more **flexibility** than traditional public schools **in exchange for increased accountability**. A public charter school must have its charter petition renewed every five years by its authorizer.

The "charter" that establishes each school is a contract that details the school's mission, program, performance goals, and methods of assessment.

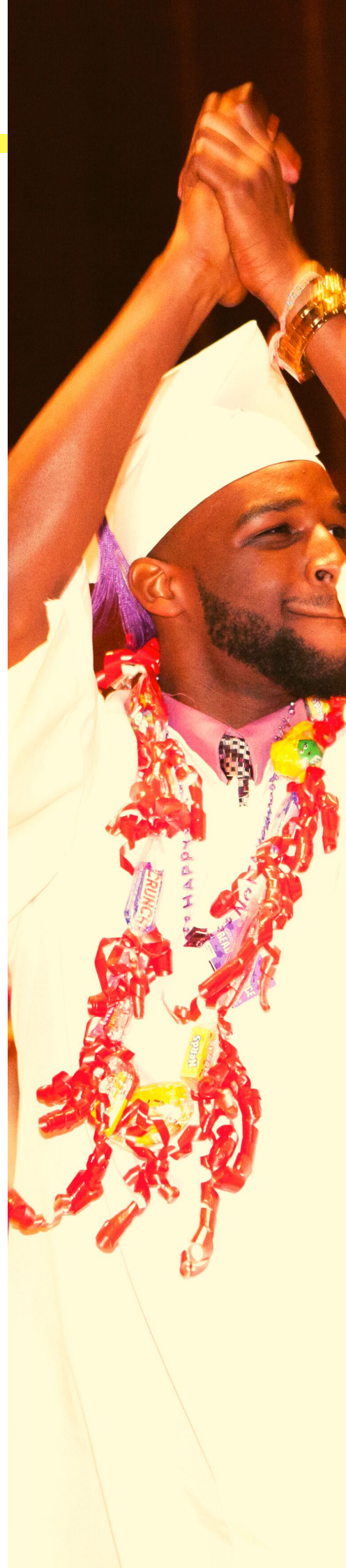
Every public charter school has an authorizer which, subject to state law, may be a district school board, university, mayor's office, or nonprofit organization.

Authorizers are responsible for holding charter schools accountable for compliance with their operating agreements or "charters."

If a charter school is not performing better than traditional public schools or operating ethically, it is closed by its authorizer.

Charters hold blind lotteries for admission when there are more applications than space.

In Oakland, 95% of all charters use the same enrollment system as the district.



WHY I CHOSE A CHARTER SCHOOL FOR MY CHILD

OAKLAND STORIES

- Ms. Letty Maldonado
- Parent, Aspire ERES Academy



When the time came for my son to attend school, I was afraid he would be lost in a system, that at the age of 5 he would be labeled as lazy or disobedient because he could not communicate his needs. I was afraid he would come to dislike school due to his own challenges and disabilities. Having experienced a small school myself, I knew that ERES would be a place where I wouldn't have to spend all of my energy fighting to get him what he needed.

Early intervention allowed him to thrive and be successful at ERES. I credit the teachers for supporting him and making so many great things happen for him. I am proud to share that Ian has been celebrated and recently received honorary recognition for reaching his reading goals. **THIS IS BECAUSE ERES SEES AND UNDERSTANDS IAN.** He's not just a kid that is labeled as having too much energy or simply looks like he is refusing to do hard work. And, do you know what the best part is that Ian has never felt that he is any different at school.

WHY I CHOSE A CHARTER SCHOOL FOR MY CHILD

OAKLAND STORIES

- Ms. Connie "Mama" Williams
- Grandparent, Lighthouse/Lodestar



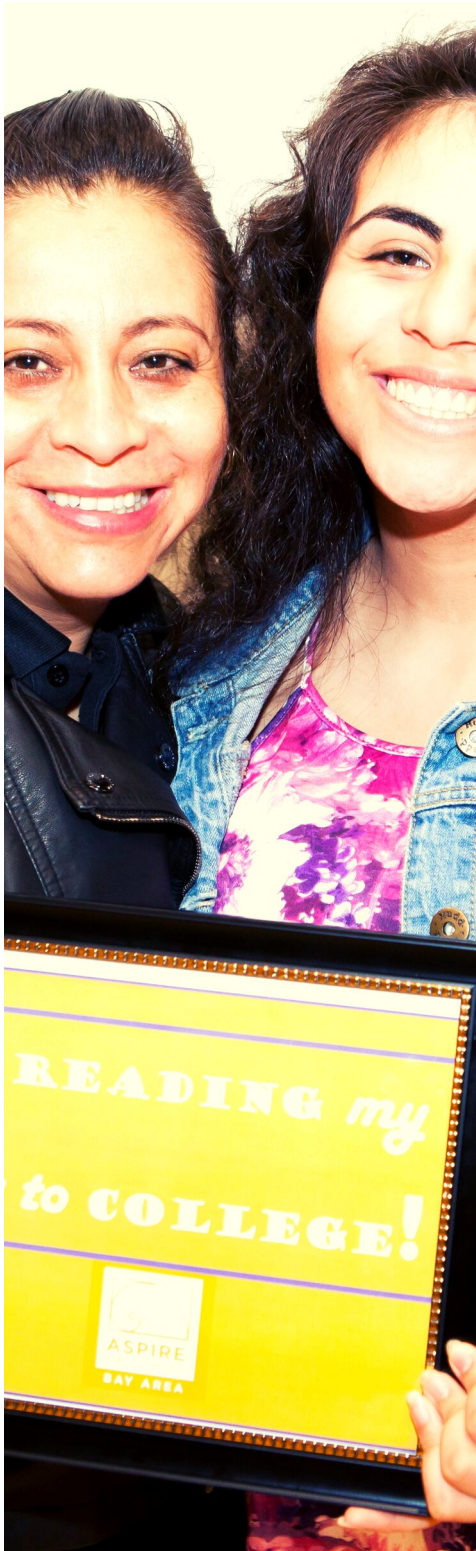
I graduated in 1978 from OUSD and couldn't read. That's not what I wanted for my kids...

I found quality at Lighthouse and Lodestar... I had little support from my working parents. I'm so proud of how I fought for my kids... I saw my kids weren't prepared for high school, so I put them into Lighthouse... I see so much difference in Lighthouse and Lodestar. In other schools, they didn't talk to me about my kids' grades...

I was against charters but then I saw they were doing really well and the kids were going to college. That's what I want for my daughter.

WHAT ARE COMMON MYTHS ABOUT CHARTER SCHOOLS?

MYTHBUSTER



MYTH:

Charter schools are for-profit schools that are privatizing education

FACTS:

- As of July 1, 2019, all charter schools in Oakland and throughout the state of California are required to be run by non-profit organizations.
- There are NO for-profit charter schools in Oakland.
- Charter schools are public schools open to any child, free of charge.
- Public charter schools exist to provide school choice for families and communities. The majority of funding comes primarily through federal, state and local tax dollars.

WHAT ARE COMMON MYTHS ABOUT CHARTER SCHOOLS?

MYTHBUSTER



MYTH:

Charter schools lack accountability.

FACTS:

- Charter schools are given greater flexibility, but with that flexibility comes greater oversight than traditional public schools. All charter schools are required to provide regular and detailed financial reports to their authorizers.
- All charter schools are required to meet state and federal education standards.
- Charter schools meet the same ethics and transparency laws as OUSD, with open meetings and records as required by the Brown Act.
- Across the state, charter schools are accountable for outperforming comparable schools in the district. The charter reauthorization process, which takes place every five years, ensures that the school is meeting students' academic and social-emotional needs. The process ensures that the school is both financially and ethically sound. If standards are not met, the authorizer closes the school.

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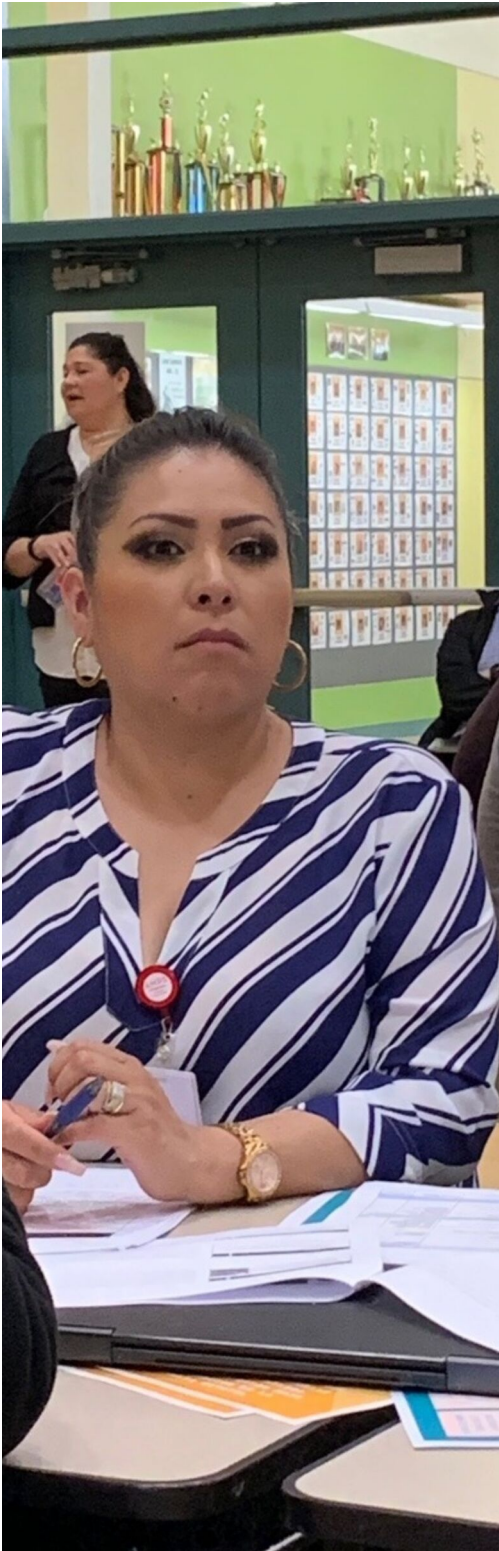
Charter schools don't serve all students and reject underperforming students or students with special needs

FACTS:

- Charter schools are public schools, open to all students, regardless of zip code, income, or ability.
- Charter schools are tuition-free and have no admissions tests or special entrance requirements.
- 100% of charter schools admit students using a blind lottery system. 95% of charter schools in Oakland use the same enrollment system as OUSD.
- Oakland charter schools educate a higher percentage of low income students of color than traditional public schools.
- Many Oakland charter schools are providing innovative, individualized Special Education programs such as those that provide opportunities for immersion-based learning.
- Oakland charter schools are working hard to increase access of underserved students to college including access to A-G coursework.

WHAT ARE COMMON MYTHS ABOUT CHARTER SCHOOLS?

MYTHBUSTER



MYTH:

Charter schools take money and enrollment from traditional district schools.

FACTS:

- In California, public school funding follows the student, with the funding going to the public school the parents choose, whether a charter school or a traditional district school.
- Charter schools receive less funding for each student than a traditional district school would if it were to serve the same student and has a higher count of high needs students than the authorizing district.
- Charters also pay an oversight fee to their school district authorizer.
- Charter also often have to pay more for facility costs than a traditional district school.