
Cyber and Home School Charter Schools

Defining New Forms of Public Schooling

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The Basics (CER, 2003)

❑ Charter Schools

- ❑ 2,700 schools in 40 states and D.C.
- ❑ 684,000 charter school students

❑ Cyber Charters

- ❑ Est. 60 cyber charters in 15 states
- ❑ Est. 16,000 cyber charter students

❑ Home School Charters

- ❑ Est. 52,000 enrolled students in CA and AK
- ❑ In CA, 119 home school charters, serving 50,000 students (30% of state charter population)

Non-classroom charters account for 10% of national charter school student population

Stories: The Good

□ Pennsylvania

- Western Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School proves able to operate with lower per-pupil expenditures than what is traditionally provided to public schools
 - Returns approximately \$2,000 dollars for each student enrolled to the student's district of residence.
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Stories: The Bad

❑ California

- ❑ Collapse of CA Charter Academy left 6,000 students attending 60 separate schools without seats right before start of 2004-05 school year.
- ❑ State educators seeking criminal charges after an audit found that the school misused \$25.6 million.
- ❑ HomeSmartKids charged a 37.5% management fee, leading to a profit of \$517,892

❑ Pennsylvania

- ❑ TEACH-Einstein Charter Academy, largest cyber charter in the state, sued by over 100 local districts and became target of parent complaints for failure to deliver instruction and materials.
 - ❑ School later closed.
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Stories: The Ugly

- ❑ Pennsylvania
 - ❑ 105 local districts refused to provide Western Pennsylvania Cyber schools with per-pupil funding totaling \$900,000
 - ❑ 70% budget shortfall
 - ❑ State withheld \$850,000 dollars in state aid from 60 districts for failure to comply with funding guidelines
 - ❑ PA School Board Assoc and 4 districts sue the state, claim cyber charters are home-schools
 - ❑ Protracted legal battle
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New Forms of Schooling

There is substantial debate over the definition of non-classroom charters

	Home school Charters	Cyber Charters	Traditional Schools
Teaching and Learning	<p><i>Primary Source</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents <p><i>Supplemental Sources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource centers • Third party curriculum • Paraprofessionals • Computer software • Support groups • Library • Tutors 	<p><i>Primary Sources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer software • Third party curriculum • External teacher (synchronously or asynchronously) <p><i>Supplemental Sources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents • Teachers • Resource centers • Paraprofessionals • Library • Tutors 	<p><i>Primary Sources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers • Directed classroom instruction <p><i>Supplemental sources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After-school programs • Parents • Library • Tutors • Field trips • Extracurricular activities
Organizational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home-based setting • Parent-directed instruction • Individualized curriculum • Varied pedagogy • Parental oversight • Peer Involvement (voluntary) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varied educational setting (Minimal site-based learning) • Computer-based instruction • Tailored mass curriculum • Information/dissemination based pedagogy • Parent/Teacher oversight • Peer Involvement (varied) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined classroom-based educational setting • Classroom directed instruction • Mass curriculum • Group/cooperative-based pedagogy • Teacher and administrative oversight • Peer involvement mandatory
Governance	<p><i>Immediate Authority</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents <p><i>Ultimate Authority</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charter school board • Charter granting agency • State regulatory agency 	<p><i>Immediate Authority</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyber School • Teachers • Third-party curriculum provider <p><i>Ultimate Authority</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charter school board • Charter granting agency • State regulatory agency 	<p><i>Immediate Authority</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers • Administrators <p><i>Ultimate Authority</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent/district • Board of Education • State regulatory agency
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiscal • Charter granting agency • Achievement testing (if required) • Market driven parental choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiscal • Charter granting agency • Achievement testing (if required) • Market driven parental choice • Third-party curriculum providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory/Rule-based • Fiscal • Student attendance • Achievement testing • District oversight

Policy Issues

How should the state be involved?

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- ❑ Accounting for an influx of traditional home-schoolers into public education
 - ❑ Public Oversight and accountability
 - ❑ Measures of student performance
 - ❑ Measures of program quality
 - ❑ Time value versus “seat time”
 - ❑ Enrollment boundaries and responsibilities
 - ❑ A state not a local institution
 - ❑ Per-pupil funding for non-classroom learning
 - ❑ Lower costs for teachers and facilities
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SB 740: Recommended Funding Levels

2002-2003

Recommended Funding Level	70 Percent	80 Percent	Full Funding
Percent of “total public revenues” expended on certified staff salaries and benefits	<35 Percent, or	35 to 50 Percent	>/= 50 Percent
Percent of “total revenues” expended on instruction and related services	<55 Percent	>/= 55 Percent	

* Pursuant to California Administrative Code of Regulations, Title V, §11963.4

Source: Charter Schools Development Center (2002)

2003-2004

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Source: Charter Schools Development Center (2002)

Questions of State Governance

- ❑ Policy solutions seem to be pointing towards central state agencies playing a larger role in the oversight and regulation of nonclassroom charter schools.
 - ❑ But, how will this affect expected autonomy?
 - ❑ Will state involvement legitimize nonclassroom learning?
 - ❑ Or, will state involvement limit is potential and appeal?
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