



# MYTHS OR CONCERNS

## Regarding Charter Schools

**MYTH:** Charter schools are private schools that receive additional money by charging parents tuition.

**FACT:** Charter schools are free public schools with no tuition charged to parents. Charters are a school of choice for parents.

**CONCERN:** Charters take money away from the schools.

**FACT:** The money goes with the child. Money is given to the public school where the child attends to help offset the cost of educating students. This money is a per pupil allocation given to them by the state. It is actually not the school's money, but the money of the taxpayers. Parents of charter school students are also taxpayers.

**FACT:** When parents are not satisfied with their local school district's schools, they could choose to move to another district. The former district will receive no funding for this child. If parents choose a charter school in the area, 1/3 of the per pupil allocation from the state still goes to the school district that the child resides in and the district has not "lost" all of the funding.

**FACT:** Charter schools operate on fewer government funds than other public schools. Charters also do not receive building aid as do other public schools. Therefore it is necessary to seek outside funding by raising the money from contributions made by private funders or through partnerships with other business organizations.

**CONCERN:** School districts are forced to pay a high cost for transporting charter school students.

**FACT:** Local districts are required to pay for the transportation of the student, if the student lives within a 15 mile radius of the school, or provide the same transportation needs as they would for those parochial students living in their district. Local school districts receive state aid for transporting these students.

**FACT:** In some cases Riverhead Charter School is providing a bus to transport students to RCS when they live outside the radius, or when the local district refuses to provide transportation to students. RCS receives no aid for transportation and is an added expense in the charter school budget.

**MYTH:** In a year when funding from the state has been cut, school districts are still paying the same amount of money per student to the charter school.

**FACT:** Charter schools' per pupil allocation will also be affected since Charter school funding is based on district spending, and is not directly related to state aid levels; that is, if districts spend less, charters will get less.

**MYTH:** Charter schools pick and choose who they want enrolled at their charter, therefore selecting only the good academic students.

**FACT:** Charters were not created to educate only the already academically fit nor can they do so by law. All applicants are accepted on a first come, first serve basis. If there are more applicants than openings they are placed in a lottery. Siblings of those already attending the charter will be given first priority when openings are available. We have many students that have special education needs as well as students who have academic enrichment needs.

**MYTH:** Charter Schools are not accountable.

**FACT:** Charters schools are more accountable than other public schools. The charter school is subject to the same health and safety, and student assessment requirements as other public schools. The school must be operated in a fiscally sound manner. The school needs to be in good academic standing as defined by the state. Charters have to abide by the goals and standards they have set in their charter. Many times the goals of a charter school have higher expectations than the goals of the NYS standards. The school has to provide evidence of parent and student satisfaction. They are required to teach the NYS standards and take the NYS assessments just like all public schools. Unlike the other public schools, charters can be closed down if they do not demonstrate these standards over time. Charters have to submit a renewal plan every 5 years and be approved for continued operation.

charting the course...