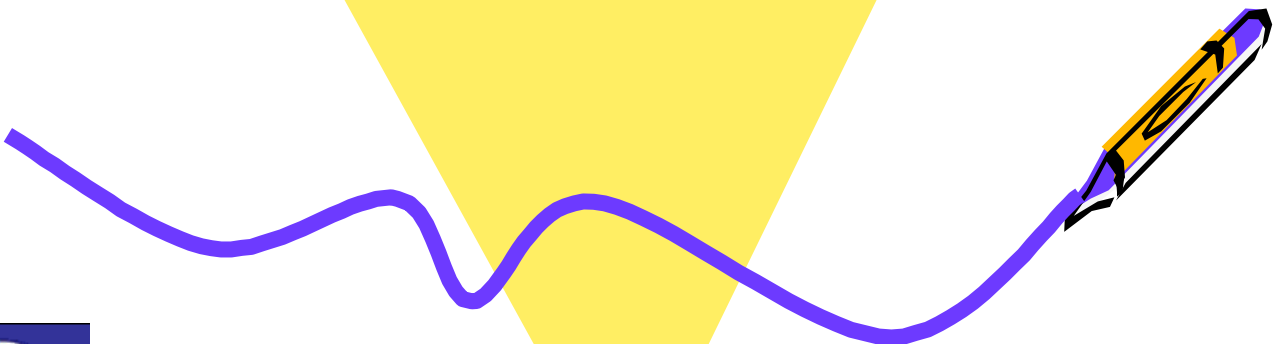




# 20 Good Reasons To Fund Charter Schools

- ☑ The legislature intended for these schools to be funded and thrive.
- ☑ The schools have proven their value.
- ☑ The students are thriving and achieving—the goal of public education.
- ☑ Everyone benefits from high-performing schools operating at lower costs.



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## 20 GOOD REASONS TO FIX CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING

It was never intended that state-authorized charter schools—whether specifically connected to school districts or not—be unfunded or so limitedly funded they strangled. The legislature wanted to:

- “Promote and encourage the establishment and operation of charter and open enrollment schools in New Hampshire” (1997), and
- “Encourage the establishment of public charter schools that meet the needs and interests of pupils, parents, communities, regions, and the state as a whole” (added 2003—for the statewide schools).

And it was not intended for New Hampshire to only have charter schools connected to a school district. In fact, our law defines a charter school as “*an open enrollment public school, operated independent of any school board*” (RSA 194-B: 1). The legislature wanted schools that were different and could serve regions and be designed around the needs of students.

### So what was intended in 2003 to fund these regional state-authorized schools?

House Bill 135 (2003) funded state-authorized chartered public schools by:

- State grants, appropriated in the budget as of July 1, 2003,
- local district funding, starting July 1, 2004, based on
- weighted state aid as per RSA 198:40, I.

HB 135, 2003: “*For any charter school authorized by the state board of education, the pupil's resident district shall pay tuition beginning July 1, 2004, and every fiscal year thereafter, in an amount per pupil determined in RSA 198: 40, I.*” (This would have provided almost \$4500 per student. Schools would now be receiving probably \$6,000 or more, like other schools with weighted state education aid this year.)

**Charter school law has changed again and again.** A fixed amount of STATE AID is now paid DIRECTLY to the charter school. DISTRICT contributions have been edited out of statute for the state-authorized schools. The original weighted aid, what schools need, was edited out of statute and changed to a low, fixed amount.

Each year there is another reason to not fix charter school funding and put these schools aside. Two have closed. We can study for another 5 years but eventually the legislature has to vote a solution. .

The two proposals advanced in 2008 are:

1. a fixed amount with a second, weighted amount bringing the schools to \$6,500 weighted state aid for schools independent of districts, as was intended (the state does this for other students),
2. an amount from state aid and an amount from districts, all adjusted through state aid and paid directly from the state (apparently this is almost no additional money).

Chartered public schools are intended to operate for 20% less than average, not 70% less than average. It was not intended for these schools to have so little public funding they cannot even afford teachers.

And it was not intended that these public schools be forced to become not-for-profit corporations with the Secretary of State (another statutory change). These public schools are public corporations modeled after the SAU corporation, required by law to follow public school accounting guidelines, not non-profit business accounting requirements.

The legislature should not abandon these students and schools.

Besides being fair and right, there are good reasons to fund charter schools.

# 20 Good Reasons to Fund Charter Schools

	THE GOOD REASON	A FEW DETAILS
<b>1</b>	<b>The legislature created the schools to have 80% funding, a reduction of 20% and a cost-saving.</b>	Most taxpayers would like the state to support schools designed to operate for 20% or even 30% less.
<b>2</b>	<b>It was intended that charter schools have weighted aid and fair support. The impact is minor</b>	This small additional amount of weighted aid would barely be noticed. New Hampshire spends 2.446 billion on public education. This is a few hundred students. It's what was intended.
<b>3</b>	<b>It's a less expensive way to expand or create smaller class size.</b>	The lower-class-size initiative costs millions in facility expansion. This is a less expensive way to lower class size.
<b>4</b>	<b>Smaller environments = more individual attention = less cost in remedial services</b>	The cost of remedial services for under-performing students can average \$3,000 to \$12,000 per student year after year. Charter schools require less remedial services because they are smaller and more individualized.
<b>5</b>	<b>Less regulation = less administrative overhead</b>	These schools are designed to have less regulation. Less regulation lessens administrative overhead. Schools are still very good.
<b>6</b>	<b>These schools draw in private and corporate philanthropy</b>	Private philanthropy is available but first, philanthropists must know schools are at least sustainable and a worthy investment.
<b>7</b>	<b>Better bang for the buck— more relationship between what is spent and what is accomplished</b>	Taxpayers appreciate when their hard-earned tax dollars results in a benefit to the students. These schools are for students who thrive in a different environment.
<b>8</b>	<b>It isn't additional money, it's restructuring available funding—it doesn't cost more</b>	We have 225,000 public students no matter where they attend school. State aid is redistributed and adjusted almost every year.
<b>9</b>	<b>Preventing drop-outs saves the state money &amp; is better for town economies</b>	2,129 students dropped out in 2005-2006. By the time a student drops out, our investment is likely \$100,000. Wouldn't our investment of tax dollars in each student argue for small schools where these students succeed?
<b>10</b>	<b>It's a cost-efficient way of doing Research, development, and education innovations</b>	Districts save money when a smaller school tries out an idea to see if it works. These schools help prevent larger districts wasting funds on new ideas that haven't been tried.
<b>11</b>	<b>Districts pay tuitions to schools they did not authorize now.</b>	Districts spent \$105,564,677 on tuitions to other public schools (2005-06 data).
<b>12</b>	<b>It saves wear and tear on the system — paperwork, demands, meetings, compliance challenges—when parents want a different choice</b>	When parents feel their child doesn't fit and want a change, the administrative time, teacher meetings, and even legal challenges create costs and staffing demands for districts and the department of education. Happy families = cost savings.

<b>13</b>	<b>Successful students benefit local economies</b>	A student who leaves high school gives up 50% of lifetime income. This isn't good for towns.
<b>14</b>	<b>Brings new adults to teaching or former teachers back to teaching— a statewide critical need</b>	New Hampshire has a critical shortage of teachers in almost every area except English, History, and Elementary. Charter schools are bringing much-needed teachers into the system.
<b>15</b>	<b>Federal funding is available to start schools</b>	Each new school can bring in \$350,000 to \$500,000 in supplemental, start-up funding.
<b>16</b>	<b>Potential for significant district and state cost savings in special education without lessening benefit</b>	In 2006-2007, districts spent 18.2% of total budgets on special education, costing <b>\$415,946,689</b> — approximately \$11,000-\$12,000 per student-- just for special education services. Less special services often result.
<b>17</b>	<b>Parents contribute significantly, e.g. transportation and volunteerism</b>	Public districts <b>spent 4.3% of budgets transporting students</b> in FY 06. There's no to-and-from transportation with chartered public schools. Parents transport.
<b>18</b>	<b>Saves on new facility costs, by using existing and available buildings</b>	In FY 07 district <b>facility costs</b> were <b>\$96,882,412</b> . The state also spends \$45- \$50 million in building aid. Charter schools use existing facilities, lease/purchase agreements, historic town buildings, co-locate with businesses. Extracting the overflow of students with chartered schools mitigates the need to build and saves.
<b>19</b>	<b>A vehicle for bringing back small village and town schools, adding economic boosts for some of the state's smallest towns</b>	The Town of Surry's village school closed because they could not sustain 25 students. They opened Surry Village Charter School and expect 50- 70 students next year! Thriving choice schools help sustain thriving, small, New Hampshire communities.
<b>20</b>	<b>Brings new facility aid monies into the state, and loan guarantees for small schools</b>	States where charter schools have a revenue stream specifically for facility costs are eligible for the federal charter school facility grant programs. A facility stipend would pay for itself and ultimately have long-term cost benefits.

**The reasons to fix the charter school funding this year ...?**

The schools have proven their value.  
The students are thriving and achieving.  
They provide a good value--a good investment for the tax dollar.

Let's not keep these public students outside fair funding again this year.

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