



Charter School Numbers 2008: Count 'Em Up

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At least one hundred thousand children now have an opportunity to attend a quality school of choice that they did not have last year, thanks to the 355 new charter schools that opened for the 2008-09 school year. The [number of public charter schools](#) operating in the U.S. has grown to 4,568 according to the annual charter school research survey conducted by The Center for Education Reform (CER). The survey, which since 1996 has been the most reliable source of comprehensive, accurate data on the status and condition of all charter schools, shows consistent growth patterns year to year in the numbers of these innovative public schools which are opened by choice, accountable for results, and free from most rules and regulations that burden conventional public schools.

"Nationwide, the options available to parents demanding better schools for our children are growing, despite continued opposition and restrictive legislation in states," says CER president Jeanne Allen. "With more than 1.3 million children in these supportive learning environments where they can succeed, it's clear why both the presidential candidates to some extent support the charter concept."

In an election season where both campaigns have stepped up their rhetoric on education policy and reform, charter schools continue to offer parents and students an innovative option to their traditionally assigned public school. (The opinions of the presidential candidates as well as all candidates for Governor and U.S. Senate on charter schools are part of CER's [selection year guide](#) and our [Voter's Blog](#).)

State charter growth was highest again in Arizona, California and Florida. All three states have strong or improved charter legislation that fosters charter schools.

While experiencing continued expansion, charter school growth could be even more robust if states enacted strong legislation guaranteeing equity among all public schools and lifted restrictions on numbers and operations of new schools. Caps on the number of operating charter schools remain in place in North Carolina, Texas, Massachusetts and many other states. Texas alone has a waiting list of more than 17,000 students hoping for the chance to enroll in a charter school.

The Center for Education Reform tracks and grades charter laws across the United States, grading each on a scale of "A" to "F" and offering profiles for each state on their website, www.edreform.com.

The Center for Education Reform drives the creation of better educational opportunities for all children. CER changes laws, minds and cultures to allow good schools to flourish.

