



IDAHO PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BASICS (as of January 2020)

- 1) A public charter school is nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations, and is not affiliated with a sectarian school or religious institution. Charter schools are open to all students who apply and cannot charge tuition.
- 2) A charter school must use a lottery if more students apply for admissions to the school than can be admitted.
- 3) In 2020, 60 public charter schools in Idaho are serving over 25,000 students, which represents about 8% of Idaho’s K-12 students. If Idaho’s public charter schools students were all in one school district it would be Idaho’s third largest after West Ada and Boise School District.
- 4) Performance of charter schools compared to traditional public school alternatives in Idaho:

Subject	Significantly Worse		Not Significantly Different		Significantly Better	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Reading	7	17%	17	41%	17	41%
Math	8	20%	16	39%	17	41%

Data come from Stanford’s CREDO Report on Idaho Charter School Performance, 2019

- 5) Average charter school per pupil funding in 2019-20: between \$6,200 and \$7,300 depending on types of students served. Charter schools receive all state and federal dollars allocated for their students. They also receive funding from the Charter School Facilities Program (about \$400 per pupil in 2019-20). Idaho charter schools cannot access local bonds and levies.
- 6) A charter school is required to be audited annually and their budgets, financials, and contracts must be public and available on their web site.
- 7) Charter schools must participate in all state assessments (ISAT math and ELA in grades 3-8). ISAT math and ELA in 10th grade, and 4-year cohort graduation rate. The Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) is given to all (K-3) public school students who qualify. The screener is

mandatory for Idaho public school students in the Fall and Spring with optional yearly progress monitoring.

- 8) Charter schools are fiscally and legally autonomous schools with independent charter school boards. A public charter school shall be organized and managed under the Idaho nonprofit corporation act. The board of directors of a public charter school shall be deemed public agents authorized by a state-approved authorizing entity.
- 9) Charter schools must be authorized by a state approved charter authoring entity: 1) a public school district, 2) the Idaho Public Charter School Commission (PCSC); or 3) a public or private nonsectarian Idaho-based college or university. PCSC authorizes vast majority of Idaho charter schools, while no colleges or universities currently authorize a public charter school.
- 10) Charter school teachers must be certified, although teachers may apply for a waiver or any of the limited alternative certification options provided by the State Board of Education.
- 11) Charter school administrators have an alternative pathway to certification.
- 12) State law does not require any charter schools to be part of a district's collective bargaining agreement.
- 13) State law requires participation in the relevant employee retirement systems.
- 14) Idaho charter schools are strongly encouraged to provide student transportation and food services for eligible students.
- 15) Charter schools must report data seven times a year through Idaho's System for Educational Excellence (ISEE) portal.
- 16) Charter schools are required to have and maintain student information systems and are subject to all FERPA and HIPAA requirements.
- 17) Charter school board meetings must comply with Idaho's Open Meetings Law and Freedom of Information requests.
- 18) A charter school may sue or be sued, purchase, receive, hold and convey real and personal property for school purposes, and enter into contracts in its own name, including contracts for services.
- 19) A charter school may borrow money to finance the purchase or lease of school building facilities, equipment and furnishings for those buildings.
- 20) Charter schools can contract with educational service providers for management purposes.