

# KEY ISSUE ALERT

February 23, 2017

## Charter School Expansion (HB 634)

The Missouri House of Representative is currently considering House Bill (HB) 634 that would expand the number of unaccountable, privately run charter schools. These new charter schools would be allowed to open in any school district in the state, regardless of whether or not another school is needed in that local community.

*Today's discussion point:*

### TAXPAYERS LOSE \$620 MILLION ON CHARTERS

In 1999 charter schools were given the OK to open in the St. Louis and Kansas City Public School Districts; since then Missouri tax payers have sunk more than \$620 million into twenty-one charter schools that failed.

Compounding the problem, when a charter school fails, students are forced to enroll in another school and that school must spend additional resources to get the students back up to grade-level.

Current data doesn't look much better, as less than half of charter schools currently operating in Missouri can't even meet minimum performance standards.

**Contact your representatives and let them know that charter school expansion is bad for your local public schools.**

### [House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee](#)

Below are other resources that administrators can use and share with others:

- [MOParent FAO](#)
- [MASA FAO](#)
- [Charter Expansion \(HB634\) Talking Points](#)
- [Letters Sent to Education Committee](#)
- [Sample Board Resolution](#)

## Charter Schools: Primary Concerns

**Defined:** Charter schools are classified as public schools and funded by Missouri taxpayers; however, they operate more like private schools. An unelected board governs charter schools and neither local communities nor locally elected school boards have no power to oversee them or hold them accountable.

**Failure:** Charter schools have been in existence since 1999 in the St. Louis and Kansas City School Districts. Since that time, twenty-one charter schools have failed. This failure has cost state and local taxpayers more than \$620 million. Compounding the problem, when a charter school fails, students are forced to enroll in another school and that school must spend additional resources to get the students back up to grade-level.

**Failure Continues:** According to 2016 data, of the 39 charter school operating in the state of Missouri, 11 would be deemed provisionally accredited and six would be deemed unaccredited. Four did not receive a score because they are considered too new. In total, less than half (46%) of charter schools are meeting the minimum requirements to be accredited.

**Funding:** Charter schools receive the equivalent of all federal, state, and local dollars that a school district would receive for every student that they enroll. This is accomplished by withholding the total amount per student from the local school district in which the charter school is operating.

**Draining funds:** Local communities do not have a say in whether a charter school can open in their school district, therefore, taxpayers are not allowed to determine if the school is even needed in the community. As more charter schools open, costs increase across the community in the form of administrative and operating costs. Meaning less money is going into the classroom to serve students.

**Oversight:** Unlike traditional public schools, charter schools are not regulated by the State Board of Education. In fact, the State Board of Education is not allowed to accredit or close failing charter schools. Instead, charter schools are regulated by their sponsoring entity. In Missouri, the entities that sponsor charter schools are typically colleges, universities and the Missouri Charter School Commission.