



What You Need to Know:

- DC Public Schools (DCPS) includes all traditional public schools and is led by the Chancellor, who sets the educational and budget priorities for those schools.
- Charter schools operate more independently, with the freedom to innovate and make their own policies. Policy and funding decisions are made by the leader of each Local Education Agency (LEA).
- All kids have access to both DCPS and public charter schools, and every school will be rated using the same Star Rating Framework on the new School Report Card.

What is the Difference Between DCPS and Charter Schools?

In DC, our public education system is made up of two types of schools: DCPS and public charter schools. DCPS includes all of the traditional schools in the District which have centralized school policies subject to regulation and oversight from the District government. Charter schools, on the other hand, are given the freedom to innovate and implement non-traditional school models or policies in exchange for increased accountability for student performance.

	DCPS	Charter Schools
Regulation	Must follow all District laws and regulations	Freedom to create their own policies
Leadership	Centralized decision-making process led by the Chancellor	Individual LEA Executive Leaders have autonomy to make decisions
Curriculum	Chosen by DC Central Office with some input from principals	Each individual LEA chooses their own curriculum
Staffing	Teacher positions are allocated using the Comprehensive Staffing Model formula	LEA leaders decide how they want to structure staff positions at their schools
Facilities	Provided by the District	Funded with the Charter Facilities Allotment

How Do Students Enroll at Each Type of School?

DC uses a common lottery system, My School DC, to help provide **all children access to both DCPS and charter schools**. DCPS schools are neighborhood-based, and students guaranteed a spot at their neighborhood DCPS school. Beyond their neighborhood DCPS school, parents can use the school lottery to for these school options:

- Participating public charter schools (PK3–12)
- DCPS schools outside your boundary or feeder pattern for any grade (PK3–12), including DCPS citywide schools
- PK3 or PK4 programs at any DCPS school, including your in-boundary school
- DCPS selective high schools (9–12)



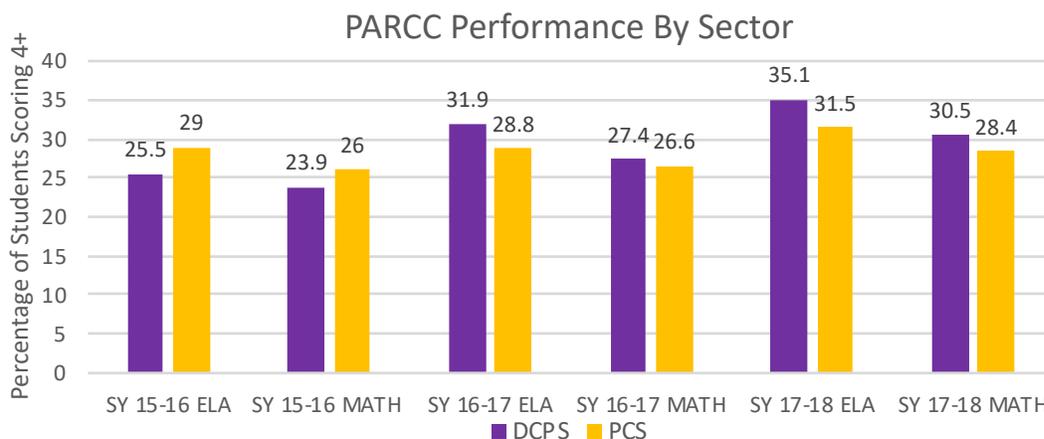
How Are DCPS and Charter Schools Funded?

Most of the funding for **both DCPS and charter schools** comes from the **Uniform per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF)**, which provides funding for each student that is enrolled in the school. Some additional money comes from the federal government, and schools may also receive donations from philanthropic or parent teacher organizations.

Both DCPS and charter schools are funded based on enrollment projections for the upcoming school year. One key difference is that because **DCPS schools are by-right schools**, if **less students enroll than expected**, the level of funding provided to schools doesn't change to ensure proper resources for any students that may enroll later in the year. However, that is not the case for charter schools, as the amount of funding they receive is adjusted if their actual enrollment does not meet the projected amount.

Ownership of school facilities is another major difference between the sectors. The Department of General Services (DGS) provides facilities for DCPS, but not for charter schools. Instead, charter schools receive a per student facilities allotment to help cover rent, leasing, maintenance, and renovations of school facilities. Importantly, in 2015, a group of nonprofits and charter schools filed a lawsuit against the District arguing that this method of funding is inequitable, resulting in an unfair financial burden for charter schools.

Comparing Traditional and Charter School Performance



Based on PARCC results, the standardized test that DC uses to measure academic performance, both DCPS and charter schools have made small gains in the last three years. However, both sectors have much work to do to get all students ready for college and careers.

How Can Parents Get Involved?

- Look out for DC's new State Report Card in December to find out about all of our public schools are performing
- Go to myschooldc.org to learn about all of your child's school options and apply to enroll
- Contact PAVE's **community organizing team** at organizers@dcpave.org for more information

Learn More:

- ❖ Read the Center for Public Education's report outlining the facts, research and misunderstandings around charter schools: <http://bit.ly/2Q37DEh>
- ❖ Find information about DCPS at dcps.dc.gov and public charter schools at dcpcsb.org