Charter Schools – An Integral Part of the Utah Public Education System

Prepared by the
Office of Legislative Research & General Counsel
January 25, 2011
What is a Charter School?

Charter schools are public schools open to all students, and operate on public funds without tuition.
How Do You Start a Charter School?

• Complete an application and write a charter

• Approval by a chartering entity
  – State Charter School Board
  – School District
  – Higher Education Institution

• Approval by the State Board of Education

A charter is a **Contract** between the charter school and the chartering entity.
Application Includes

- School’s mission, performance goals, and accountability plan
- Business and technology plans
- Grade levels, class sizes, and target population to be served
- Potential physical location and relative school district, degree of community support
- Three-year budget and fiscal procedures and policies
- Model of governance and school operations
- Intended curriculum
- Student enrollment procedures
- Special education plan and assurances
- Teacher evaluation policies
## Which Entities Charter?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chartering Entity</th>
<th># of Schools Chartered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Charter School Board</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Districts:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cache</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logan</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt Lake City</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
State Charter School Board

- 7 members appointed by the Governor
  - 2 finance/small business management
  - 3 from nominations from Utah's charter schools
  - 2 from nominations from Utah State Board of Education
Districts where 5 or more charter schools are located:

- Alpine (13)
- Davis (7)
- Jordan (7)
- Salt Lake (7)
- Granite (6)
- Canyons (5)
- Nebo (5)
Charter School Enrollment

• 2010 enrollment was 40,121
• 7% of total public
• 2010 Largest District Enrollments
  – Granite  68,573
  – Alpine   66,044
  – Davis    66,019
  – Jordan   49,729
  – Canyons  33,469
School and Enrollment Growth

Growth in charter schools

- 1999: 6
- 2001: 3
- 2003: 5
- 2005: 36
- 2007: 50
- 2009: 76

Growth in charter enrollments

- 1999: 390
- 2001: 5,000
- 2003: 10,000
- 2005: 11,528
- 2007: 40,121
- 2009: 40,121


Enrollments: 390, 5,000, 10,000, 11,528, 40,121, 40,121
# New Charters Opening Aug. 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charter School</th>
<th>Grades Served</th>
<th>Location (District)</th>
<th>Chartering Entity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alianza Academy</td>
<td>K-8</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>State Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Preparatory Academy – Accelerated School</td>
<td>K-9</td>
<td>Draper (Canyons)</td>
<td>State Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bear Canyon High School for the Sports and Medical Sciences</td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>Kaysville (Davis)</td>
<td>State Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah Connections Academy</td>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>State Board</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Legal Status/Governance

• Public school/Nonprofit corporation
• Accountable to chartering entity for performance
• Tort liability – same as other public schools
• Subject to:
  - Open and Public Meetings Act
  - GRAMA
Charter School Requirements

• Nonsectarian
• No tuition
• Admission
  – open to all state residents
  – based on lottery, some exceptions
• Meet all applicable federal, state, & local laws
Exceptions from Other Public Schools

• May not levy property taxes
• Not required to:
  – Provide pupil transportation
  – Have a library
  – Establish a school community council
  – Use building as civic center
• Exempt from:
  – Utah Orderly School Termination Procedures Act
  – Educator Evaluation Program
• May opt into Public Employees’ Contributory Retirement Act
Minimum School Program Expenditures
FY 2010-11 = $2,912,216,064

- Basic Program: $1,920,122,700
- Related to Basic Program: $623,701,302
- Voted & Board Leeway Program: $368,392,062

Data Source: Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst
Basic Program

Number of WPUs
X WPU value ($2,577)
= Basic Program cost
Related to Basic Programs

“Below the line” programs, not based on WPUs, for example:

- Pupil transportation miles
- Number of teachers
Voted & Board Leeway Program

Local Tax Revenue, $310,463,914.00

State Guarantee, $57,928,148.00

Data Source: Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst
Charter School Funding

Charter schools are funded the same as school districts except:

• $100 per pupil for charter school administrative costs
• No pupil transportation funds
• Grade weights
• Local Replacement Funding – to replace local school district property tax revenue
Local Replacement Funds

• $1,673 (est.) per pupil for FY 2011-12
• Includes average district per pupil revenues from local property tax levies except:
  – Recreation levy
  – Reading levy
  – Transportation levy
  – Judgment levy
Local Replacement Funds

State Appropriations

- 2004: $2,377,172
- 2005: $20,000,000
- 2006: $30,000,000
- 2007: $40,000,000
- 2008: $50,000,000
- 2009: $60,000,000
- 2010: $70,000,000
- 2011: $80,000,000
- 2012: $68,218,141 est.
State and School Districts’ Contributions to Local Replacement Funding
FY 2011-12

State Contribution: $68,218,141
School Districts’ Contribution: $8,985,197
Studies/Research

- Legislative Audits
  - 2010 - Charter School Oversight
  - 2007 - Utah Charter Schools
- 2006 Report to Executive Approps. Committee
  - OLRGC, LFA, USOE
- 2006 Utah Charter School Study
  - Utah Policy Education Center
- 2005 Challenges Facing Utah Charter Schools
  - Utah Foundation Research Report
Please feel free to contact the Education Team with any questions:

Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel

(801) 538-1032