

Charter Schools Training Spring 2026



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Protecting every child's right to learn



Road Map for Today's Training



Charter School Overview

Charter School Enrollment

Promotion Policy and Academic Supports in
Charter Schools

Special Education and Charter Schools

Charter School Discipline Policies

TRIVIA!

(Please put your responses in the chat box!)



Which of the following is true about a charter school?

1. It is a type of public school
2. It (generally) operates independent of the NYC Department of Education
3. It operates under a charter which is to be renewed every 5 years
4. All of the above





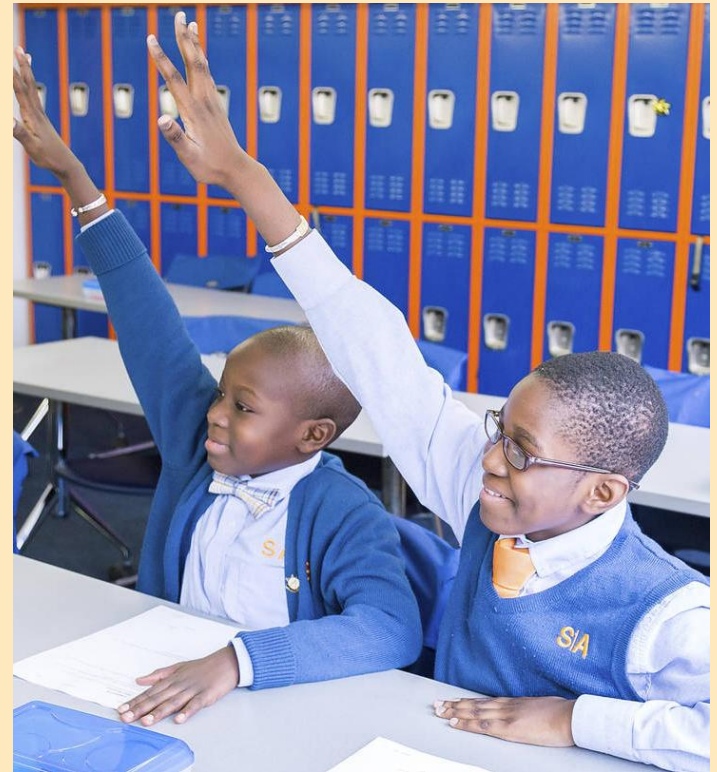
MORE TRIVIA!

(Please put your responses in the chat box!)



What percentage of students attend NYC charter schools?

- a) ~ 5%
- b) ~ 8%
- c) ~10
- d) ~15%



Charter School Enrollment Process



NYC Charter Schools are tuition-free public schools. During any given year – if a Charter School's number of applicants "exceeds the number of available seats," - then the Charter School is legally obligated to conduct a random lottery to ensure all its seats are filled.

According to NYC Charter Schools Center, individuals can apply for Charter Schools by:

1. Using the Common Online Charter School application at [Apply Online – Charter Schools NYC](#). You can submit one application to be sent to multiple Charter Schools via this platform. However, please note that NOT all Charter School networks have opted to use this platform. Ensure that the Charter School that you are interested in utilizes this platform before completing an application;
2. Visit the Charter School's website and apply directly via the website;
3. Stop by the Charter School's front desk to inquire about an application.

Charter School Enrollment Process (cont.)



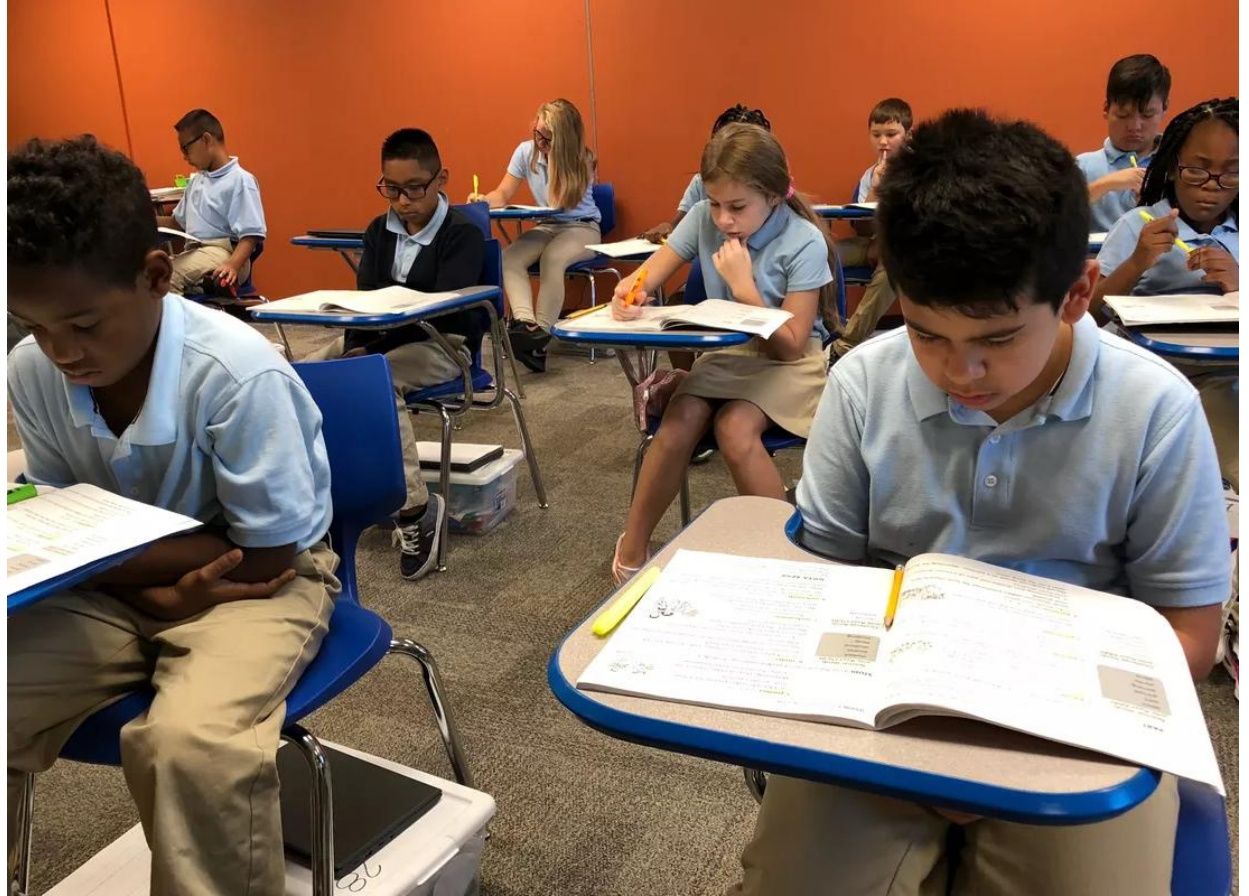
What should **stand out** about the Charter School Lottery System?

1. It should be bias – free! A lottery system is more capable of ridding the selection process of favoritism, bias, or discrimination;
2. No entry exam! Admittedly, exams are not everyone's forte and that is a-okay. The lottery process eliminates the need for competitive examinations which don't always demonstrate a student's true intellectual capacities.

But remember, the lottery system is not perfect. Each Charter School network may take other factors into consideration when conducting the lottery, so please research and familiarize yourself with the process beforehand!



Academics in Charter Schools



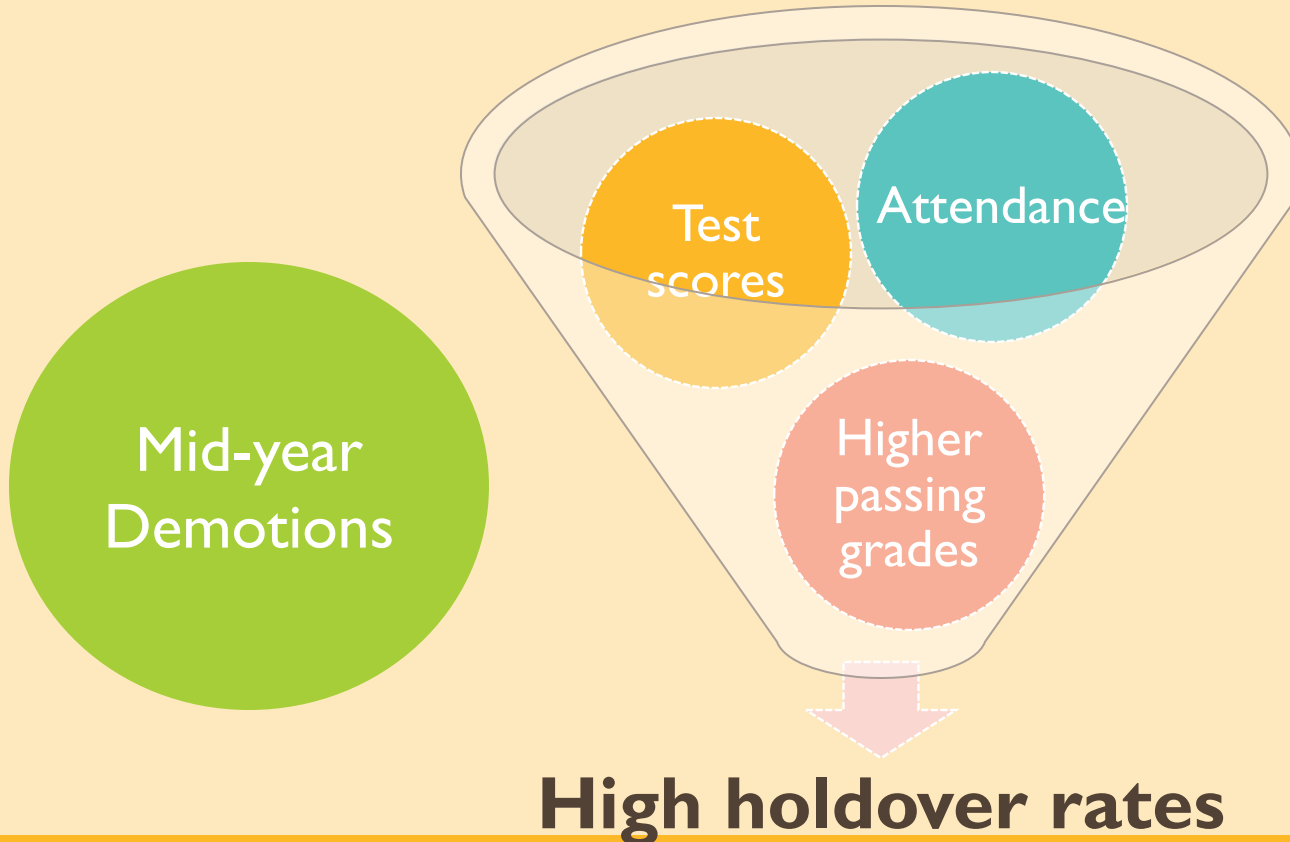
Promotion policy and student supports



Promotion Policy in Charter Schools



Each charter school sets its own promotion or academic policy. Be sure to ask for the policies before enrollment.



Does Immigration Status of Family Matter?



- **No.** Your child has the right to go to school regardless of his or her immigration status, or your family's immigration status.
- No one can ask you about your immigration status. If someone knows, they must keep it confidential.
- If a document asks for a social security number, simply leave it blank.
- Students are entitled to receive **all school services, including free lunch, free breakfast, transportation, and educational services**, even if they or their family are undocumented.



TRIVIA!



What percentage of students in NYC charter schools are Multilingual/ English language learners?

- A. ~20%
- B. ~16%
- C. ~11%
- D. ~7%



MLL/ELL Programs in Charters



Charter schools must provide English language learning instruction to help students achieve the same educational goals as all students.



Language Access Rights



Translation

- Letters
- Forms
- Meeting notices
- Report cards
- Special education documents

Interpretation

- Parent-teacher conferences
- IEP meetings
- Suspension hearings
- Special education hearings
- At any DOE office

Students with Disabilities in Charter Schools





True or False?



Charter schools must provide the services on a student's IEP.

- A. True
- B. False



IEP Process in Charter Schools



Students with disabilities in charter schools who need an Individualized Education Program (IEP) follow the same process as students in district schools.

Referral

Consent

Evaluation

IEP
Development

Placement/
Services



Evaluations in Charter Schools



- DOE evaluates students
- Charter school *can* evaluate, at DOE discretion

Evaluation



IEPs and Charter Schools



- Charter school:
 - must provide student-specific information
 - proposes programs and services (which require parents' consent and parent can cut off at any time)
 - special and general education teachers (where appropriate) must attend IEP meeting
- Related service providers can attend the meeting

IEP
Development



IEPs and Charter Schools



- Student needs drive recommendation **not** services available at the charter school
- Parent can invite anyone with knowledge of the child to IEP meeting
- If you are a non-English speaker, you have the right to have an interpreter available at the IEP meeting (can also request IEP in your language)

IEP
Development



Special Education in Charter Schools

The DOE must...

- Evaluate students
- Determine eligibility
- Revise/Amend IEPs
- Declassify students

Charter Schools must...

- Provide program and services to students directly; or
- Provide services through a contract agency; or
- Ask the DOE to provide services



Promotion Criteria & Students with Disabilities in Charter Schools



Charter schools may...

- Use their own promotion criteria for students with IEPs
- Request modified promotion criteria on a student's IEP



Special Education in Charter Schools



NYC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
**GUIDE TO
SPECIAL EDUCATION
PROCEDURES FOR
STUDENTS ATTENDING
CHARTER SCHOOLS**
A SHARED PATH TO SUCCESS

If you have questions about the special education process in NYC Charter Schools, you can refer to this guide!



Section 504 and Charter Schools



Charter schools receive federal funding and are required to follow Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. This means...

Charter schools cannot

- Discriminate against students with disabilities

Charter schools must

- Provide reasonable accommodations to students



Requesting a 504 Plan



- Charter schools should inform parents of students' right to 504 accommodations
- Parents can request a 504 Plan from the charter school





Discipline in Charter Schools



**Student rights and protections for
students with disabilities**



True or False?



Charter schools in New York City must follow the DOE's Discipline Code?

- A. True
- B. False



Discipline in Charter Schools



How are they different?

Charter schools create their own discipline policies

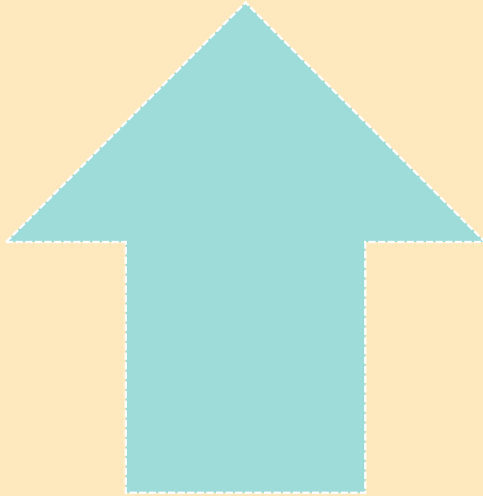
- The DOE's Discipline Code does not apply

How are they similar?

- Federal Due Process rules apply



Discipline in Charter Schools

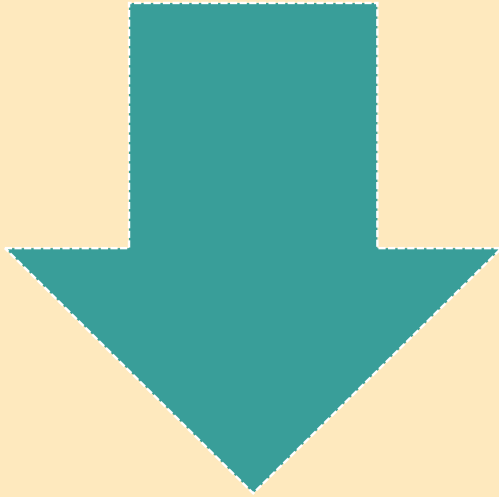


Lawful Suspensions

- Must follow school's discipline policy
- In-school suspensions
- Out-of-school suspensions
- Expulsion



Discipline in Charter Schools



Illegal Removals

- Suspensions for undefined periods
- Automatic “trigger” suspensions
- Conditional returns after suspension
- Shortened schedules
- Double jeopardy*



Due Process: Notice



Parents have the right to

Notice of the charges and the basis of the accusation

Notice **before** the suspension, unless the student poses a continuing danger or ongoing threat of disruption

Notice as soon as possible after the suspension, if immediate removal is allowed



Due Process: The Right To Be Heard

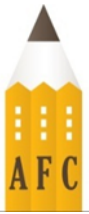


Students have the right to:

An explanation of the evidence and a chance to tell their side of the story *before* they're suspended, unless there's:

- A continuing danger to people or property, or
- An ongoing threat of disruption to the academic process.

Students cannot be forced to give a statement against their own interests.



Due Process: The Right to be Heard



For longer-term suspensions (11 days or more), charter schools must follow more formal procedures

The school must prove the charges at the hearing

The hearing officer must be impartial and base their decision on evidence presented at the hearing

Parents have the right to call witnesses, submit evidence, and be represented by counsel

Hearings must be on the record



Appeals of Charter School Suspensions



Remember: You can appeal a suspension!

Grievance procedures come from NYS Charter Schools Act, NOT individual school policies!

Appeals go to:

1. The charter school's Board of Trustees
2. The Charter School Authorizer
3. The Board of Regents



Suspensions & Students with Disabilities



Committees on Special Education must

- Conduct expedited evaluations
- Hold MDR meetings

Charter schools must

- Hold MDRs for students with 504 Plans



What is an MDR again?



A meeting to decide if the student's behavior was:

caused by the student's disability;

OR

a result of the school's failure to follow the student's IEP or BIP

Required when the student is suspended for 11 or more days in a row, w/in 40 school days, or with a pattern of behavior.



Is it a Manifestation?



YES

- Student returns to school
- CSE conducts:
 - Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)
 - Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)

NO

- Suspension continues
- CSE must:
 - Consider doing an FBA and BIP
 - Determine placement and services during the suspension



Charter School Takeaways



Charter schools cannot refuse to educate *MLLs/ELLs* or *students with disabilities*

Charter schools should offer *specially designed instruction* to students with IEPs who need unique supports and services

Students suspended from charter schools get *due process* and *alternative instruction*

Make sure *students with IEPs* get *MDRs* when suspended



Thank you!

MORE QUESTIONS?

EMAIL US AT:

INFO@ADVOCATESFORCHILDREN.ORG

