

LETTER TO A LEGISLATOR OR LAWMAKER

Help spread the word of the great work charter schools do every day.



In an effort for the Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools (FCPCS) to advocate on behalf of all charter schools, an Advocacy Toolkit for School Leaders has been made available. Students, parents and teachers are encouraged to write a letter to a legislator or lawmaker telling what it means to be part of a charter school.

Students can write about their success as a charter school student. Parents can write telling why they chose charter over other neighborhood schools, and school leaders can write to tell why equitable funding to charter schools is critical to sustainability and providing a high quality educational program.

The following guidelines are provided:

- Download the Advocacy Toolkit Brochure found on the FCPCS website. Page four details suggested talking points for speaking or writing to legislators and local officials.

Letter Writing Activity:

- **Students** in grades 4-12 are encouraged to write letters to their legislators to thank them for their support of public charter schools and share their success stories as a charter school student. Topics for writing:
 - What it means to be a charter school student;
 - What makes my charter school different from the neighborhood school;
 - Tell how the charter school has helped increase academic achievement;
 - Highlight special programs;
 - Three reasons I love my charter school.
- **Parents** are encouraged to write about school choice and tell why they choose a charter school over traditional public. Topics for writing:
 - What it means to be a parent of a charter school student;
 - Why I chose charter over traditional public;
 - Tell how you depend on the charter school for a quality education;
 - Tell how you are involved in decision making;
 - Ask why charter schools are funded differently than traditional public schools.

- **Teachers and school leaders** are encouraged to write to influence lawmakers to provide equitable funding for charter schools to continue to provide high quality services to students who are enrolled. Topics for writing:
 - What it means to be a charter school teacher or leader;
 - Ask lawmakers to provide equitable funding to charter schools;
 - Tell why you choose to work in a charter school;
 - Highlight student achievement and special programs;
 - Tell how charter schools do more with less and how diminishing funds have a negative impact on the children served.
 - Ask lawmakers to reduce the gap between what a district school and a charter school get;
 - Ask for stability in funding to plan for sustainability in staff and facilities.

Mailing Address:

- There is power in numbers, therefore, FCPCS suggests bundling letters as a package before mailing them to legislators. Letters should be organized by class or grade level, including student, parent, teacher and school leaders. **Letters can be similar and address the same issues, but should not be identical.**
- Go to FCPCS website; www.floridacharterschools.org.
- Under the “Parent” Tab, you will find a Legislator Lookup link.
- Use the link to locate the legislative officials for the zip code of the campus or the home of the families.

Timeline:

Although the legislative session is in the spring, delegation meetings begin as early as October 1. FCPCS suggest mailing letters during the month of October to be heard by legislators and lawmakers before session begins.

