

League of Women Voters of Greater Tucson Position on Charter Schools

This position was reached following study and member consensus in 2011.

Charter schools are public schools that are privately operated.

Charter schools should be held to the same high standards as all Arizona public schools.

All public schools should be permitted and encouraged to innovate. They must be allowed flexibility on class size, length of school day, teaching techniques, and special subject focus (such as science, the arts, technology).

Charter schools need more initial direction as they are started and organized to comply with legal requirements.

All public school teachers must be well qualified.

The curriculum must comply with the Arizona State Standards. Test score results and school ranking must be easily available to the public.

Academic evaluation of charter and traditional public schools needs to be equitable. However, there is still insufficient oversight of charter schools. The state staff should be adequate to monitor student achievement.

Schools that close must arrange for an orderly transfer of students and return to the State available money and property that has been given to them from the State's General Fund.

The Arizona Constitution states that all public schools must be funded for proper maintenance, improvement, and development. It is imperative that sufficient funding be provided to assure steady progress in teaching and learning. This would better prepare students with the tools to thrive in a competitive and changing world.

Open enrollment has given parents and students more options for school choice. However, the availability of public information must be more accessible to all.

A better tracking system of students is even more important due to school choice or open enrollment.