



Public School Options in New York State

Questions to ask and things to consider when choosing a school

- What are the school's goals and are they meeting those goals?
- What does the school expect from students?
- Is the school doing better academically than other schools?
- How long has the school been open and what does the future look like?
- How do parents know if the school is doing well?
- How will this school help my child succeed?
- What role do parents play at the school?
- How long is the school day? The school year?
- How many students are in each class?
- What kind of environment does my child need?
- How does my child learn best?
- What are your first impressions?

Families in New York State have options when choosing a public school for their children to attend. Availability depends on the area in which you live. Public school choices include:

- Traditional public schools
- Charter schools
- Magnet schools

Traditional Public Schools

Traditional public schools are open to all students in grades kindergarten through 12 and receive funding from New York State and the Federal Government. They must meet minimum requirements set by New York State and the Federal Government in terms of staffing, administration, and academic achievement. Curricula (what is taught at the school), the budget, and other policies are set through locally elected school boards.

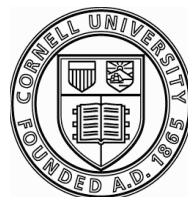
Magnet Schools

Magnet schools are part of the public school system. Their administration operates in the same way as a traditional public school. Magnet schools have something special to offer over a traditional school which "draws" students to them. For example, they may offer unique programming, such as a focus on the arts or a unique way of teaching. Magnet schools receive additional funding that allows them to spend more money on their students, supplies, teachers, and programs.

Magnet school goals:

- Promote high achievement
- Promote cultural diversity
- Offer a choice of how subjects are taught

All public school students are eligible to attend, but many magnet schools have more applications than slots available and use certain selection criteria.



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Charter Schools

Charter schools are also public schools. They receive public education funding, but usually raise private funds as well. These schools are tuition free and governed by a board of trustees. Charter schools in New York are meant to accomplish the following:

- Improve student learning and achievement, especially for students who are at risk of failing.
- Encourage the use of new and different ways of teaching.
- Provide families with more choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available in the public school system.
- Measure how well students are doing based on their academic performance.

In New York State, teachers, parents, school administrators and community residents can submit an application to start a charter school and they can partner with a college, university, museum, educational institution, a non-profit corporation, or a for-profit business.

Applications can be submitted and approved by the State University Trustees, the Board of Regents, and local boards of education. They will only be initially approved for five years.

All charter schools have an Accountability Plan that shows their goals for student achievement, how those goals will be met, and how they will be measured.

Charter school students are required to take New York State assessments, including Regents exams and have to show that students are meeting or exceeding state standards. They must comply with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

Charter schools have flexibility in the design, staffing, and operation of the school. For example, charter schools do not have to have a principal. The school has the freedom to choose how to set up the administration, how many hours and days to operate, and what classes to offer.

Any child eligible for admission to a traditional public school is eligible for admission to a public charter school—no matter what school district they live in.

For more information about public school options in New York State or other questions related to your children's education or parenting in general, contact your New York State Parental Information & Resource Center (PIRC) at (315) 788-8450, info@nyspirc.org or visit the New York PIRC website at www.nyspirc.org. You can view any school's reportcard on the New York State Department of Education's Website at <https://www.nystart.gov/publicweb/>.

Parental Information and Resource Center (PIRC) Families and Communities Together with Schools

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