



**APPLETON AREA**  
**SCHOOL DISTRICT**

## **What is a Charter School?**

Charter schools are public, nonsectarian (nonreligious) schools created through a contract or “charter” between the operators and the sponsoring school board. They are first and foremost about student learning and achievement. Charter schools are also about educational choices, school-site accountability and autonomy, innovation, and revitalizing public education from the ground up.

Wisconsin was one of the first states to enact a charter school law in the early 1990’s. The Wisconsin State Charter School Law gives charter schools the freedom from most traditional state mandates and regulations. In return for this freedom, charter schools are held accountable for student performance, financial matters, and effective school operations. The superintendent and school board involve the entire community in the establishment of charter schools because collaboration is the driving force behind any endeavor, especially an educational one. Charter schools and their sponsors create an accountability plan as part of the charter contract.

Facts about charter schools:

- Charter schools are tuition free and enrollment is voluntary.
- They have the flexibility to design and deliver innovative curriculum in nontraditional ways in order to meet the needs of participating students.
- They may not discriminate in admissions, programs, or activities.
- Teachers are certified and licensed by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.
- Employees are district employees and subject to all district policies and regulations.

## **Why Do We Have Charter Schools?**

The Appleton Area School District (AASD) is currently operating 13 successful charter schools with an enrollment of approximately 3000 students. The AASD recognized the need for charter schools through conversations with parents and students, outreach to local and statewide communities, and the knowledge that the traditional classroom does not always meet the needs of all students. Our charter school students generate state aids just as traditional students do.

The AASD has encouraged the growth of charter schools to better meet the diverse needs of its students at no additional cost to the district. We believe our community desires alternative choices in learning; these options strengthen our total district program.

The Appleton Area School District does not discriminate against students on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, age, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or physical, cognitive, emotional or learning disability in its education programs or activities.