

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

We aspire to be great community schools of choice for the families we serve.

We are united behind the original ideals of the charter school contract. We embrace our diverse communities, which include immigrants, people of color, children with disabilities, the homeless, English language learners, people of all faiths, and the LGBTQ community. We believe in the power of schools to transform the lives of young people AND in the responsibility of government to ensure that all children have adequate nutrition, shelter, health care, and educational opportunity.

Equity

- We reaffirm that charter schools are public schools. All public schools should receive equitable funding.
- We are committed to transparency in our practices and accountability to our students, parents, government authorizers, and the public at-large.
- As public institutions, our charter schools are open, welcoming, and responsive to our many stakeholders.

Autonomy & Accountability

- Autonomy in exchange for accountability is the bedrock principle of charter schools.
- Real accountability must be rooted in the development of the whole child and the needs of society to improve our democracy and cultivate citizens who can solve the intractable problems of our time.
- The work we do at our schools is for the greater good. We guard against any practice that subordinates the work we do to personal or corporate profit.

Collaboration

- Because charter schools were created as laboratories of innovation, we seek out opportunities for collaboration among district, charter, and independent schools.
- We seek out opportunities to learn from and exchange ideas with our colleagues.
- Our workplaces are collaborative, not adversarial. We invest in our teachers so that they can invest in us.

Diversity

- We commit to serving students who reflect our communities and neighborhoods, particularly students with the greatest educational needs.
- We actively recruit, retain and serve the highest-need students, such as students with disabilities, English language learners, and students with challenging life circumstances.
- We are determined to educate all of our students to the best of our ability, every day.

Innovation

- Our independence is a public trust. Autonomy provides the freedom to innovate and differentiate.
- We have an obligation to research, develop and implement new ideas, practices and strategies.
- School innovation is reinforced by use of multiple measures for evaluation. We must learn how to measure what is truly important and germane to the mission of our schools.
- We share these practices, serving as a laboratory for all other public schools.

Respect for Teachers

- We rely on a professional and compassionate teaching staff to model the attitudes we expect in our students. Our schools provide innovative opportunities that encourage young teachers to excel at their craft and become great educators.
- Personnel evaluations and all our employment practices are fair and transparent.

Governance & Community

- Strong independent boards and an engaged community are essential to school governance and student success.
- Boards must be fully and demonstrably independent from service providers and must have robust process for community input.
- Decision-making involves feedback from our students, families and the community at large.

Quality

- All students have the right to a high-quality education.
- Our parents, students, and caregivers choose our schools and trust that we will provide the best possible education.
- We support their right to make that choice and will do everything in our power to fulfill our responsibilities.



**Coalition of
Public
Independent
Charter Schools**

"INDEPENDENTLY TOGETHER"

Students, families, educators—indeed the entire country—need a national, independent, democratically organized group to advocate for independently managed, financially transparent, community oriented public charter schools as articulated in our Statement of Principles.

-- Resolution passed at the 1st Independent Charter School Symposium



CPICS is a member-run organization of educators, families and supporters who believe in the democratic principles that underlie the movement for public chartered schools. CPICS schools provide a broad and growing range of options in public education, explore new leadership structures and innovate and collaborate in the public interest. We aspire to be the democratic voice of our schools and to promote public school autonomy, transparency and accountability.

Three Strategies

Strengthening the independent charter sector is a powerful way to expand educational opportunities for all students. We do this by:

Shaping Practices We provide resources and peer-to-peer mentoring to schools through our network of experienced school leaders.

Informing Policy We work with policy makers at the state and federal levels to advocate for policies that support independent charter schools and work to the benefit of all public education.

Increasing Collaboration We encourage collaboration between schools and school leaders nationwide. This encourages best practices and alleviates misunderstandings so that all sectors of education work toward a common goal.

WHY JOIN? Our independence is an extraordinary public trust and an opportunity to leverage the transformative power of our schools to change the lives of young people. Joining CPICS and adding your voice will allow us to improve practices, affect policies, increase collaboration, and reclaim the narrative around charter schools.

YOUR CPICS MEMBERSHIP GIVES YOU

- **Advocacy** A strong, supportive voice for the charter school sector, rooted and grounded in our shared principles
- **Access** A peer-to-peer network of school leaders for mentoring and guidance on issues related to independent charter schools; Job Board
- **Assistance** Exclusive discounts from preferred vendors in PD/HR/legal services; targeted support for start-ups

CPICS MEMBERSHIP is open to schools, families, individuals and groups that support our mission. Member schools affirm operation of our schools within the following ethical guidelines:

- Maintenance of IRS not-for-profit status
- Compliance with all federal and state laws regarding financial transparency, operational transparency, and accountability
- Practice of site-based decision making
- Elimination of exclusionary admissions requirements or admissions tests
- Affirmation of the Coalition's "Statement of Principles"

**Empowering and advocating for
public independent charter schools**

Join now at indiecharters.org!

