



League of Women Voters of Nashville

Position Regarding Charter Schools

The League of Women Voters of Nashville (LWVN) believes that a quality public education system is an essential element for maintaining a strong and viable democracy. We support educational policies that raise levels of student achievement and address the needs of diverse student populations.

In a democracy, public education serves many purposes. Regardless of the school setting, a quality education that supports high levels of academic achievement should be the primary goal for public investment of educational dollars.

In our increasingly diverse society, public schools provide an important locus for building community across differences. Promoting diversity in student populations of all public schools continues to be an important goal.

After extensive study, members of LWVN have concluded that:

- All public schools – whether they are directly operated by a school board or indirectly in the form of a charter school – should be managed and operated by non-profit entities.
- Charter schools should remain the responsibility of the locally elected school board. As such, local school boards should remain as the sole authorizer for charter schools operating under the auspices of the school district. Charter schools seeking approval should not be able to apply directly to the State Board of Education or other state government body serving as a statewide authorizer.
- If a statewide body identifies a need for additional charters, it should be the state's responsibility to approve, monitor, assure sustained accountability, and provide funding for the charter school.
- The state should assume some transitional fiscal responsibility for fixed costs that school districts continue to have when students transfer to charter schools.
- Charter schools should serve English language learners and special needs students in numbers that are similar to regular public schools.

