



MAPSA
Michigan's Charter School Association

DEFINING OUR BRAND



MICHIGAN'S CHARTER SCHOOLS

BRANDING
TOOLKIT





MISSION

Our mission is to support charter schools in improving educational outcomes for Michigan's children by advancing quality education through choice and innovation.

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ABOUT US

MAPSA, Michigan's charter school association, represents the movement of Michigan charter school stakeholders communicating through the media, advocating at the Capitol, and for the 150,000 students enrolled in a charter school who are realizing their bright future. Together we can.

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Dear charter educators,

MAPSA works tirelessly in promoting Michigan's charter schools through the media and legislature and in doing so we are always awestruck at the amazing programs and curriculums that charter schools offer in innovative ways. Charter schools are raising the bar of education excellence in Michigan.

This past year, the Michigan charter school movement has been hit with mainstream discontent. From contentious politics to fraud scandals and early school closure, charters have had their fair share of negative media attention.

This Charter School Branding Toolkit is a resource for school leaders, authorizers, and management company representatives to evaluate the messaging of the brand in the public and in the media in order to increase a more positive feeling about charter schools. This toolkit includes:

- ◆ Why does Branding Matter?
- ◆ What is Charter Branding?
- ◆ Charter School Branding Audit Checklist
- ◆ Parent & Teacher Charter FAQ Handout

If and how your school tells your story can mean the difference between embracing the charter movement versus being attacked. Now is the time to unite and come together to share our positive charter school stories for all to hear!

We are here if you have any questions!

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Dan Quisenberry'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dan Quisenberry
President, MAPSA

Whatever the mission and instructional differences may be between one school to another, Michigan charter schools share an identity as members of a community offering an education that is perceived in a particular way.

Facing Reality: charters in the news.



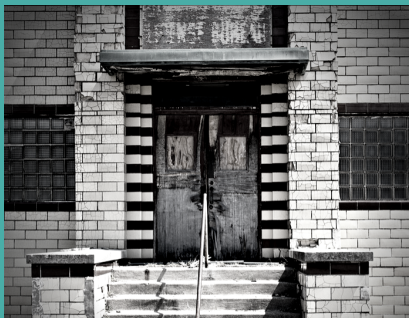
How charter schools in Michigan have hurt traditional public schools



Southfield charter school closes abruptly with just 12 school days left



For-profit run charter schools perform worse



Cozy charter-school tie-ups bring risk of fraud, federal audit finds



What 'school choice' means in the era of Trump and DeVos



Academy founder gets 41 months in federal prison



For-profit charter schools a target for some Democratic gubernatorial candidates



NAACP hears Detroiters' views on charter schools in the city



Charter Schools Blurring the Line Between Church and State

Charter schools are consistently the target of negative and sometimes aggressive attacks from opponents in the media.

Why does Branding Matter?

The Charter Branding Crisis

Charters do a great job marketing and branding their own school, where we lack is branding the Michigan charter school movement. Without a strong brand of a movement, each individual school's brand will continue to suffer. The charter school movement is lacking a clear and consistent brand in the media and most people still don't fully understand what a charter school is. Parents and families in charter schools are not being heard and opponents to charters are overbearing in their objection to school choice. The digital landscape of social media has created an opportunity for broader media coverage which continues to spin misinformation influencing public opinion on charter schools. Every experience or interaction with a Michigan charter school communicates something about the charter brand. We are only as strong as our weakest link. The closest to clarity on the charter brand is a negative perception of destroying public education. We do have a brand. It's just not what we want it to be, unfortunately.



The Charter Branding Solution

With such negative portrayals of charter schools, now more than ever, teachers and parents may feel afraid to speak up and defend their choice. It is time to unify as a movement and present clear, consistent, positive stories of student success to the public. We will not succeed by continuing to compete against one another. Success will be achieved when social media, news media, and public sources of information are flooded with positive images of school success and stories of student triumph that are personal and emotional. Success is when you can begin branding your own charter school rather than hiding in the shadows of negativity and build pride to be part of the charter movement!

Branding will unite the charter school movement in Michigan:

- ◆ Builds Trust with the Community
- ◆ Provides Consistent Messaging
- ◆ Provides a Proactive Positive Message
- ◆ Creates a better understanding
- ◆ Receives strong emotional support
- ◆ Displaces the negative media

CHARTER SCHOOLS should take every opportunity to show what is **ACTUALLY** happening within the building, as opposed to only showcasing conventional successes.

What is Charter Branding?

A brand is a **PROMISE** to students, families, communities, and teachers.

The charter brand is NOT:

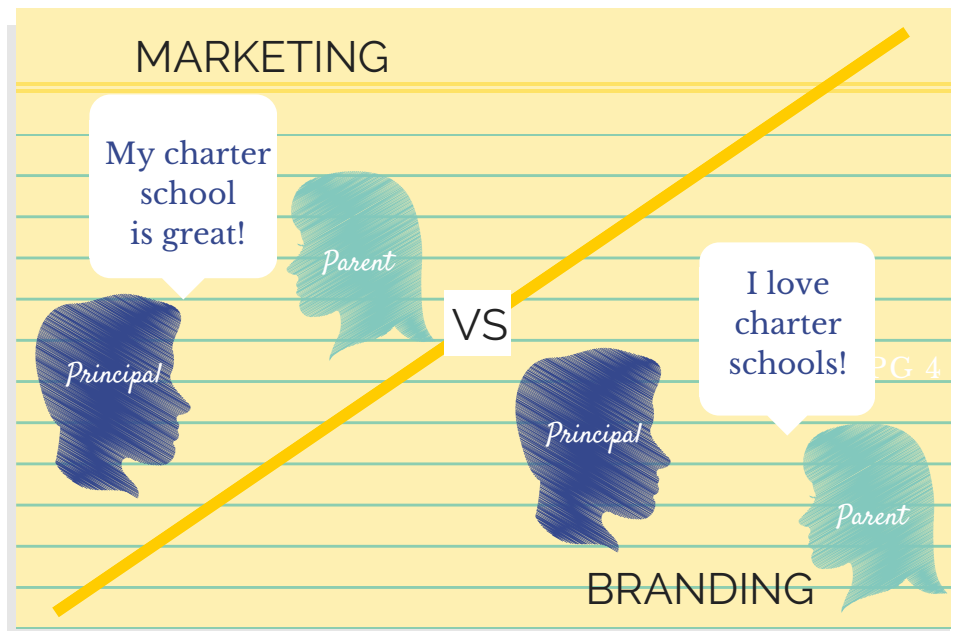
- The brand is not a logo - a logo is simply a visual expression of the brand
- The brand is not the name or slogan
- The brand is not owned by your school alone
- The brand is not a tagline or an ad campaign

What is the charter brand?

- The brand is the sum total of all association with charter schools
- The brand is what people say about charter schools... when you are not in the room
- The brand is everyone's individual responsibility to manage, protect, and advance

Branding vs. Marketing

Don't confuse branding with marketing. Although your school may not be in need of marketing to new students because you are at capacity, it is still important you are sharing your stories consistently to unify the movement and increase the positive charter school brand. Parents and teachers should be charter cheerleaders no matter who they speak to!



CHARTER SCHOOL BRANDING AUDIT CHECKLIST

Here is a short list to consider how your school(s) can impact the charter brand positively in Michigan:

- Website:** Does your website represent charter schools positively?
- Vocabulary:** Stay consistent with using "Traditional Public Schools" vs. Public Schools (because charter schools are public schools too!)
- Email Newsletters:** Do your electronic communications offer opportunities to submit good news stories? Link parents and teachers to bit.ly/chartergoodnews.
- Mission & Vision:** Does your mission and vision fulfill the promise that charter schools are truly innovative?
- Print Materials:** Do the printed materials parents and teachers receive offer your social media information and urge them to tell positive stories about your school?
 - Business Cards
 - Signage
 - Brochures
 - Newsletters & Letters
 - Application Forms
- Legislator Engagement:** Do you supply the email and social media contact information for your school's lawmakers to parents and teachers to share out their good news stories? Visit senate.michigan.gov & house.michigan.gov and invite your lawmakers to visit your school too!

Consistent satisfaction matters, and
that means you need to **DELIVER**
on your **PROMISE** every day. ”

-Carol Cheney

SOCIAL MEDIA CHECKLIST

Facebook: Tag @MICharters and use hashtags #ProudMIEducator and #celebratecharters to spread your story!

Twitter & Instagram: Include your lawmaker on your posts to tout your school's success. Also, tag @MICharters and use these hashtags:

#celebratecharters

#mileg

#ProudMIEducator

#miched

*An evolving and all-encompassing story
should be at the heart of every brand. ❤️*

Telling Your Story with Data

FIVE Data questions to consider:

- 1 How many of your students met growth targets this year? What percent?
- 2 How many of your students are proficient in reading? Math? All tested subjects? What percent?
- 3 What is your teacher retention rate?
How many of your teachers are highly qualified?
- 4 How many of your students met growth targets AND are proficient? What percent?
- 5 What was the largest rate of growth a student achieved in the past year?

Just as it is important to share photos of the basketball game and the school concert, it is even more important to display the academic success of your school using data!

Friday at 5:10 PM · 📍
Congratulations to our second grade scholars' whose academic growth was 18 percent greater than the national average in reading.

Great Job!
😊



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Charter School FAQ

What is a charter school?

They are publicly funded independent schools established by teachers, parents, or community groups under the terms of a charter with an authorizer. Public charter schools are born out of community needs and focused on community prosperity. There are currently 300 charter schools, enrolling 10% of all students in Michigan.

What is a charter school authorizer?

The authorizer assures the charter school is following all laws and regulations, as well as meeting their academic performance and financial goals. Authorizers provide oversight and can intervene with a contract at any time.

How are charter schools performing?

Michigan charter school students:

- Are more likely to be proficient and to graduate from high school
- Receive an additional 2 months of learning in Math & ELA
- Have achieved an 86% graduation rate

How are charter schools funded?

Charter schools receive money from the state, in the same way, that traditional public districts do. On average charter public schools receive about \$700 less per student than traditional public schools.

Do charter schools receive millage money?

They cannot ask voters for separate tax supported revenue to pay for facilities, technology or anything else Charter schools must fund in their facilities.

Do you have to apply to attend a charter school?

Charter schools are open to all students and you must fill out an enrollment application, however, they do not have special entrance requirements and do not charge tuition.



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Do charter schools offer special education?

Yes. Charter schools must provide special education services to any student who requires them. About 10% of charter school students receive special education services.

Do charter schools employ certified teachers?

Yes. All charter schools must use state-certified teachers.

Are charter schools for-profit?

No. Charter schools are organized by law under the Michigan Non-Profit Corporation Act. They are all non-profit public schools, however, they can like traditional public schools, contract with for-profit companies to provide goods and services to the school.

Are there teacher unions in charter schools?

Charter schools start as non-union environments and the staff has the right to choose to remain union-free, in accordance with law. The vast majority of Michigan charter school teachers have chosen to remain in a union-free environment.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!



Share your charter school story on social media or submit your story online at bit.ly/chartergoodnews and MAPSA will share with media and lawmakers to continue to build the charter school brand! Make sure to tag @MICharterSchools on your Facebook post and use the hashtag **#celebratecharters!**



@MICharters



@MICharters



@charterschools

SPEAK ALOUD

Parents



Office
Staff



Teachers



THEIR STORY MATTERS

Who are the influential personas that define the brand?

The biggest impact on the charter school brand is the many positive emotional stories of student success. Finding these stories should be easy surrounded by children who share the joy of learning and growth. However, sharing these stories to make an impact can be difficult without a defined path.

- ➔ **Parents:** need their stories to be heard loud and clear to lawmakers about school choice and the success of your charter school!
- ➔ **Office Staff:** are the hub of any school and are in a perfect place to collect and share out stories heard from parents, students, and teachers.
- ➔ **Teachers:** need to feel proud to be part of the charter school movement and share stories of innovation and success in the classroom!

Consider other influential personas to target your positive stories to:

- Local Media
- Community Stakeholders
- Legislators
- Online Parent Review Sites
- Local Realtors
- School Board Members



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