

## FAQ:

Q. I understand HOPE Community Academy is a charter school. What does that mean?

A. In Minnesota charter schools are tuition free independent public schools that are open to, and welcome all students no matter ability or need, and are governed and operated jointly by licensed teachers, parents and community members.

Charter schools are public K-12 schools started by parents, teachers, and/or community members who apply for a "charter", which defines the school's specific mission and goals, and how these goals will be measured. Charter schools must be authorized by a sponsor, who then files an affidavit of intent to sponsor a charter school with the state for approval. Sponsors of charter schools may be nonprofit organizations, foundations, local school districts, intermediate school districts, or post-secondary institutions. HOPE's sponsor is the University of St. Thomas, a highly-regarded private university in the Twin Cities.

Q. Who are charter schools accountable to?

A. Charter schools are accountable to their sponsors, parents and families, the state, and the public for achieving measurable results in student achievement and for implementing fiscally sound management. Since charter schools are public schools, they are open to anyone, free of charge.

Q. How does HOPE's performance on the tests compare to other schools?

A. HOPE performs better than some schools and not as well as other schools. Because the student populations vary from school to school, it's sometimes difficult to compare one school to another. However, comparisons are available. Visit the website of the Minnesota Association for Charter Schools to compare how HOPE's performance compares to other charter schools.

Q. How are charter schools funded?

A. Charter schools are funded by the State of Minnesota on a per-pupil basis. In addition, charter schools receive state support for their facilities expenses because they cannot issue bonds or raise taxes through levies like other traditional school districts.

Charter schools currently receive up to three years of federal charter school start-up funding. Charter schools can qualify for federal title funding, English Language Learning, and special education funds.

Q. Do charter schools have admissions policies?

A. Charter schools are public schools and are, therefore, bound by public law that defines public school admission policies as nonsectarian, nondiscriminatory, and tuition free. Charter schools are open to all students free of charge.

Q. Why do HOPE students have to wear uniforms? This creates an expense for families.

A. Uniforms are important for a number of reasons. For example, in many schools, students wear expensive trendy clothes. This creates problems for other students who feel badly. The most important reason we require uniforms is student safety. HOPE works hard to create a safe, secure and nurturing learning environment for our students-which include keeping gangs away from the school. Uniforms prevent gang activity from coming near the school.

Q. What does HOPE offer its students related to computer technology?

A. Teaching students to successfully use and excel in computer technology is a focus at HOPE Community Academy. All students enjoy the use of a computer lab with numerous computers. Each classroom has at least four computers for student use; streaming video and electronic projectors, which allow teachers to supplement learning with high-quality educational videos. Teachers and students also enjoy 10 interactive white boards which are used in classrooms, an audio-enhancement system, a technologist specialist who is available to assist students, and video production capabilities, which middle school students enjoy.