

## Magnet/Charter School Distinctions

- Existing district authorized and operated charter schools should continue to operate at the discretion of local school boards; however, they should be distinguished from independent charter schools for the sake of **transparency** in school governance. A “charter school” is governed by an independent board accountable to its authorizer, while a “magnet school” is governed, operated by, and accountable to its local school board.
- Local school boards may still authorize charter schools at their discretion; the school would be independently governed, and would be accountable to the local school board.
- Converting “instrumentality” schools to “magnet” schools will not affect any federal funding for existing schools. Rather, it will strengthen Wisconsin’s position for the federal Charter School Program (CSP) grant, which is coming to an end. In order to remain competitive for this grant, Wisconsin’s charter schools must be independent of local school boards. This CSP funding does not pay for ongoing operation expenses for any school—it only awards “planning” (the year before a school opens) and “implementation” (the first year a school is open) grants.
- Furthermore, accountable, independent public charter schools have shown stronger results than district-operated charter schools, both in Wisconsin and in a national study done by Stanford University’s CREDO.
- Magnet schools would have the same exemptions and freedoms as charter schools—the bill simply specifies that they are governed and operated by a local school board.