

Merit Academy Chartering FAQ:

[For general questions about Colorado Charter Schools, click here.](#)

- Is Woodland Park School District required to give Merit Academy a school?
 - For the 2022-2023 school year, no. However, after becoming a charter school authorizer, we're required to make available a list of underutilized spaces available to charter schools. Once such a list is created, it is up to the Board of Education to choose to sign a lease or not. At this time the WPSD board is exploring the possibility of leasing space to Merit through executive staff review and feedback to the superintendent who will continue to present options to the Board.
- Can the District charge Merit rent?
 - [No, according to law.](#) However, Merit may be charged for the use of services and pay for their share of other costs per an agreement, such as utilities, data, and phones.
- Whose responsibility is it to sign a lease for Merit Academy?
 - The Board of Education, according to statute, must sign the lease of a charter school. In many other facility decisions, the superintendent or CFO will sign an agreement.
- Whose responsibility is it to pay for improvements to make sure Merit Academy can use a facility?
 - This is a negotiated item between the District and the charter school, similar to a landlord and tenant agreement.
- Has Merit Academy been approved as a charter school for Woodland Park School District?
 - Yes, the Board of Education approved Merit as a charter school (01/26/2022).
 - During the process of approval, the Board of Education set expectations for a future contract to be developed which details the relationship between WPSD and Merit. Within the charter/district contract there will be details of the length of the charter, the role of management, and academic review the district will/will not have over Merit.

- Will the public have the opportunity to provide comments to the board of education on the approval of Merit Academy as a charter school?
 - No. The approval of the charter school has already occurred and no future comments will be received on the approval process.
- Is Merit Academy a current charter school in Colorado?
 - No. Merit Academy is currently a contract school, which has some of the same features as a charter school.
- Will the issues raised by the board of education in December 2020 regarding the chartering of Merit Academy be addressed before a contract is signed?
 - Yes. A contract is currently being developed that will address previous concerns of the charter application submitted back in 2021 by Merit Academy.
- Will Merit Academy be required to accept students from a variety of backgrounds, such as special education and low-income families?
 - Yes. Merit Academy is a public school receiving public funding and must comply with federal guidelines for serving students with special needs.
- Can students at Merit Academy participate on District athletic teams or extracurricular events?
 - Yes. Only if those sports do not already occur at Merit. [See CO Rev Stat § 22-32-116.5 \(2016\)](#)
 - Social events such as the middle school color run and other events do not qualify as extracurricular and would not be accessible by other students, including, unfortunately, Merit students due to the non-curricular nature of these events.
- Will Merit Academy receive more or less funding than standard WPSD schools?
 - Merit Academy receives the same per-pupil allocation as WPSD students. WPSD may retain up to 5% for administrative costs.
- Does Merit Academy have access to contracted services, such as food services and transportation that WPSD pays for?
 - Merit Academy will have the responsibility to contract for whatever services they require either through a third party or through the District. In whatever capacity they contracted, they would negotiate their payment schedule with that specific entity and pay out of their own budget.

- If a student is expelled from Merit Academy or WPSD, can that student attend the other in-district school?
 - The expelling school is responsible for the educational services of the student and therefore the student would not be able to transfer to another school in the district once expelled.