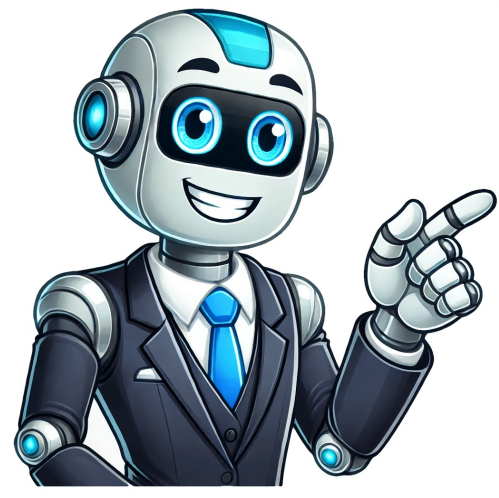


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Wellspring preparatory academy

Wellspring Preparatory High School in Grand Rapids invites you to schedule a tour and discover its unique approach to education. The school focuses on personalized teaching, moral development, and extracurricular activities to prepare students for college success. The mission is to equip each student with the skills needed to achieve high school graduation, college acceptance, and vocational success. The vision is to educate and support students through a transformative experience that fosters academic excellence, moral character, and community engagement. Academically, Wellspring Preparatory High School sets high standards for its students, providing challenging curriculum and research-supported policies to ensure safety and well-being. The school's trained safety team implements sensible protocols to keep students secure. Students are encouraged to explore various activities through the athletics and extracurricular programs, promoting friendships and community building. With a strong emphasis on STEM education, the school aims to inspire curiosity in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics from an early age. Wellspring Preparatory High School operates as an independent charter school, receiving government funding while maintaining autonomy for accountability. This allows the school to operate according to its unique principles, focusing on student growth and success. Schools that operate independently and do not charge tuition fees have been criticized for their private operation and lack of accountability. The effectiveness of charter schools compared to traditional public schools is debated, but some studies suggest that charter school students are more advanced in their education, particularly disadvantaged children and those of color. Charter schools also tend to receive less funding than public schools. In Australia, all private schools have received federal government funding since the 1970s, and they educate around 30% of high school students. These schools do not charge tuition fees, unlike charter schools in other countries. The first charter school in Bulgaria was established in 1990, and Alberta, Canada introduced legislation allowing charter schools in 1994. As of 2015, Alberta remains the only Canadian province to have enabled charter schools, with 23 campuses operated by 13 charter schools. Chile has a long history of private subsidized schooling, which is similar to charter schooling in other countries. After introducing a competitive voucher system in education in 1981, the share of private subsidized schools grew from 18.5% to 32.7% between 1980 and 2001. As of 2012, nearly 60% of Chilean students study in charter schools. In Denmark, free primary schools have existed for many years, often with roots in Grundtvig's folk high school movement. Many independent schools in Denmark have a religious focus or cater to the German-speaking minority. Around 75% of pupils' costs are covered by the public purse, with the remainder paid by parents. Private Education Systems Around the World In Denmark, around 15% of schoolchildren attend private elementary schools. These schools generate profits that stay within the business. The UK established grant-maintained schools in England and Wales in 1988, allowing individual schools to operate independently. Although these schools were abolished in 1998, many became foundation schools with a high degree of autonomy. Finland has a long history of private education, dating back to the mid-19th century. By the 1960s, there were over 346 private primary and secondary schools. While the number declined in the late 20th century, more than 80% of Finnish upper secondary schools were originally founded by private associations or companies. In Finland, private schools are regulated by the government and must follow the national curriculum, except for international language schools like International Baccalaureate schools. Tuition fees are generally not charged, but schools receive per-pupil grants from the state and municipalities. In the 1700s, the Church of Ireland initiated schools to educate the poor, sponsored by both state and charity organizations but run by the church itself. These institutions were modeled after Kilkenny College, despite critics like Bernard Mandeville expressing concerns that educating too many underprivileged children would lead them to have unrealistic expectations. Examples include Collegiate School Celbridge, Middleton College, Wilson's Hospital School, and The King's Hospital. In New Zealand, charter schools, labeled as "Partnership schools" or "kura hourua," were introduced after the 2011 general election following an agreement between the National Party and the ACT Party. This move allowed for a small number of these specialized schools to start in 2013 and 2014, catering specifically to students who had struggled within the normal state school system, many of whom faced issues with drugs, alcohol, poor attendance, and achievement. These challenges were often associated with Maori or Pacific Islander students. A notable issue arose when one of these charter schools encountered significant difficulties shortly after its inception. It was later taken over by an executive manager from Child, Youth and Family, a government social welfare organization, along with a commissioner appointed by the Ministry of Education. In Norway, privately run charter schools, known as "friskoler," were initially introduced in 2003 but eventually dismissed in 2007. However, private institutions have been part of the education system since medieval times, and today consist of various types, including Montessori and Steiner (Waldorf) charter schools, some religious schools, and 11 non-governmental funded schools like the Oslo International School. Charter schools in Norway, as well as Sweden and New Zealand, are characterized by certain restrictions. They cannot have entrance exams, and supplemental fees are heavily regulated or prohibited. Interestingly, some privately run schools in Norway can select their students and operate for profit, but only if they are not government-funded. Lastly, the United States has its own system of charter schools, which are semi-autonomous public institutions receiving public funds under a written contract with an authorizer or sponsor. They are restricted from supplementing public funds with tuition or other fees and must admit pupils on a first-come, first-served basis without entrance exams. According to the Education Commission of the States, there are approximately 900 charter schools throughout the United States. Charter Schools: A Nationwide Phenomenon Minnesota passed the first charter school law in the US in 1991, paving the way for the expansion of this unique educational model across the country. According to recent data, approximately 8,000 charter schools enrolled around 3.7 million students nationwide as of December 2021, accounting for about 7.4% of total public school students. The sector has experienced significant growth, with 291 new charter schools opening their doors in the 2021-22 school year. However, there was also a decline in enrollment, with 15,047 students leaving the system that year. New Orleans stands out as one of two cities in the US where most school students attend charter schools, with 78% of all students studied in charter schools during the 2011-12 school year. Laws governing charter schools vary greatly among states. California, Arizona, and Michigan top the list for the highest number of students enrolled in charter schools, largely due to differences in authorization processes, certification requirements, and public agency participation. In contrast to other states, Michigan charter school creation is limited to local school boards or state college and university governing bodies. Different states have varying approaches to converting private schools into charters, with some, like California, prohibiting such conversions altogether. In Arizona, the process requires fair admission policies, whereas in Michigan, a 25% student population change must be demonstrated. In contrast, Michigan requires teachers at charter schools to hold state certification, while Arizona does not. Charter schools were initially intended as part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, allowing students from under-performing schools to transfer to another school. The act also suggested that failing schools become charters if they fail to show adequate progress. As of 2015, nearly 7,000 charter schools in the US enroll over 2.9 million students. The expansion of online charter schools in the US has sparked controversy, with research highlighting their academic performance gaps compared to traditional schools. A 2015 study found significantly weaker math and reading scores among online pupils. The biggest challenge facing these schools is keeping students focused on their work. Four states have adopted specific legislation for cyber charter schools, but their diplomas are not always valued equally by universities. Some institutions apply additional requirements or quotas for applicants. The US military also classifies non-traditional diplomas at a lower tier, although high ASVAB test scores can bypass this classification. In 2014, New Orleans established the first all-charter school district, and many states have implemented legislation on state charter schools. However, some states do not enforce open meeting statutes or conflict of interest prerequisites for charter schools as they would for traditional public schools. What Are Charter Schools? On October 2, 2009, several sources reported on academies and free schools. These institutions were being discussed in relation to the then-current education policies. The BBC News Online published an article on May 26, 2010, discussing these topics further. Additionally, a Finnish report from Yksityiskoulut.fi provided information on private schools. A significant event occurred on August 9, 2011, when Finland's new Minister of Education did not show enthusiasm for Christian schools. In Germany, the Basic Law was discussed in relation to federal republic policies. Statistisches Bundesamt published a report on June 14, 2012, discussing school finances and partnerships. Several sources reported on charter schools worldwide. Hong Kong's direct subsidy scheme schools raised fees, as did some schools in New Zealand. A Swedish model for education was also being discussed. The Education in New Zealand website provided information on partnership schools or charter schools in the region. The South China Morning Post published an article about fee increases by Hong Kong's direct subsidy scheme schools. Slate magazine discussed Sweden's school choice disaster, while BBC News Online explored the concept of free schools. A recent report by Forbes highlights how non-profit charter schools can be run for profit (2021). In contrast, studies have shown that charter schools often face high closure rates over time (Strauss, August 2020, The Washington Post). Charter schools have become a lucrative venture for real estate investors, with some states providing financing to support their growth (Grant, October 2015, Real Estate section of The Wall Street Journal). According to NCES data from April 2016, charter school enrollment has been steadily increasing. Meanwhile, the Pennsylvania Department of Education reported that cyber charter schools saw significant growth in 2014. A study by Barkovich (2014) shed light on college admission officers' perceptions of cyber-charter high school applicants, highlighting potential concerns about online learning. The number of K-12 online learners has been estimated to range from 40-50,000 students in the early 2000s to around 180,000 just a year later (Clark, 2000; The Peak Group, 2002). Some critics argue that online schools may not be as effective as traditional teaching methods (Coughlan, November 2015, BBC News Online). On the other hand, an all-charter system has been implemented in New Orleans, and some proponents claim that charter schools can improve public education overall (Greenblatt, May 2014, NPR; Brown, March 2018, The Daily Beast).