

UTAH

(1998; last amended in 2007; 17th weakest of the nation's 41 charter laws)

GENERAL STATISTICS

Number of Schools Allowed	Unlimited
Number of Charters Operating (As of October 2007)	60

APPROVAL PROCESS

Eligible Chartering Authorities	Local school boards, state charter school board, with approval by state board of education.
Eligible Applicants	Any individual, group or nonprofit organization
Types of Charter Schools	Converted public, new starts
Appeals Process	Applications denied by local school board or state charter school board may be appealed to the state board of education. The state board's decision is final.
Schools May Be Started Without Third-Party Consent	No, for conversions, 2/3 of teachers and parents at school must support
Recipient of Charter	Applicant
Term of Initial Charter	3 years

OPERATIONS

Automatic Waiver from Most State and District Education Laws, Regulations, and Policies	No; may seek waivers on a case-by-case basis from state board of education
Legal Autonomy	No
Governance	Specified in the charter
For-profit service providers may manage charter	Charters may not be granted directly to for-profit organizations, but the schools may be managed by them.
Transportation for Students	The charter school may provide transportation through a contract with the local school board, a private provider, or with parents, but they are not eligible to receive any state transportation funding.
Facilities Assistance	State Charter School Finance Authority was created to handle financing charter school facilities. Charter schools can apply directly to Authority for government-rate bonds to finance facilities.
Reporting Requirements	Annual financial audit reports as required of district public schools. The governing body of a charter school shall make annual progress reports to the state board of education and the Legislature through its Education Interim Committee.

FUNDING

Amount	Charter schools receive the same state funds as other public schools. Qualified students receive all their federal funds. Schools receive an appropriation of funds to replace some of the local property tax revenue they are not eligible to receive. Estimated portion is about \$4,907.
Path	Funds pass from state and district to school
Fiscal Autonomy	No
Start-up Funds	Federal and state funds available

TEACHERS

Collective Bargaining / District Work Rules	Teachers are employees of charter school, and are not required to be district employees.
Certification	Required, but law allows for alternative certification
Leave of Absence from District	Contingent upon approval of the local school board
Retirement Benefits	Charter schools can participate in state's retirement system, or may opt out of the state's system and establish their own retirement system for its employees.

STUDENTS

Eligible Students	All students
Preference for Enrollment	Students enrolled prior, district residents, children of founding parents or staff of school, and siblings.
Enrollment Requirements	Same as other public schools
Selection Method (in case of over-enrollment)	Lottery/random process
At-Risk Provisions	None
Accountability	Each participant school shall develop an accountability plan to measure student achievement against targets established by the school including state core assessments and required Stanford Achievement Tests.
Enrollment Cap	Maximum enrollment of 27,921 students in Utah charter schools for the 2007-08 school year, and 32,921 students for the 2008-09 school year.