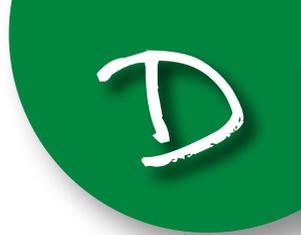


# CONNECTICUT

(Law passed in 1996; 5th weakest of the nation's 43 charter laws)



Despite being the birthplace of some of the nation's most successful charter networks like Achievement First, Connecticut's charter school law is among the weakest because only the State Board of Education can authorize charter schools, making it very difficult for charters to open and thrive. In addition, massive underfunding and a strong regulatory environment stifle charter school autonomy and innovation. Administrative policies were enacted this past year as a reaction to one recent charter school's woes, increasing the regulatory burden on the 22 schools currently operating.

## INDEPENDENT OR MULTIPLE AUTHORIZERS - NO

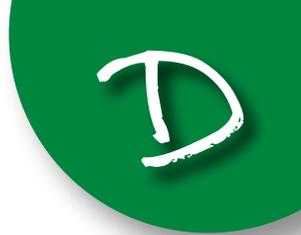
APPROVAL	The State Board of Education approves new start-up charter schools. A local board must first approve conversion charter schools, and then the State Board of Education approves them.
APPEAL	None

## OPERATIONAL AUTONOMY

STATE	No. The State Board of Education considers waiver requests on a case-by-case basis. The state maintains control over charter funding. The law does not explicitly address virtual schools. Management contracts with ESPs are not restricted, but the state board has adopted regulations, including conflict of interest, personnel and fund transfers. The State Department of Education revised its administrative policies to add additional requirements for charter schools, including: requiring background checks of staff, board members, EMO staff; requiring all charter board members to attend trainings on governance; requiring annual reporting by charters beyond academics and finances; monitoring school's compliance of open meeting laws; and additional administrative burdens for EMOs.
LOCAL	No. The State Board of Education considers waiver requests on a case-by-case basis. Charters sponsored by the state are LEAs, but the law is silent on how that translates into action and independence.
TEACHER FREEDOM	Yes for charters approved by the state; teachers may negotiate as a separate unit, or work independently. No for local charters (conversion schools); teachers remain covered by the district collective bargaining agreement, but the agreement may be modified. All new charter teachers hired after July 1, 2010, must participate in state's retirement system.

## NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ALLOWED

CAP	No cap on the number of schools. State charters may enroll no more than 250 students, 300 in K-8, or 25 percent of a district's total enrollment, whichever is less. High-achieving charters (e.g. Achievement First) can request a waiver from the enrollment cap. There are geographic restrictions on a charter's location where charters can only open in towns that have at least one school designated as a commissioner's network school or in districts designated as low achieving. Between July 2012 and July 2017, the state can approve no more than four new charters unless two of the four specialize in dual language programs. There is no cap on conversion charters.
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## EQUITY

<p>STUDENT FUNDING</p>	<p>For state-authorized charters funds pass through state and for district-authorized schools funds pass through the district. For state charters the state legislature sets an annual appropriation for the total amount of funding, meaning no money comes directly from the school district. Currently state charters receive \$11,000 per pupil. For local charters, the school district is responsible for funding the schools at a level at least equal to the per-pupil funding of the prior year, minus reimbursement, or impact aid to the district.</p> <p>“(2) The local or regional board of education of the school district in which the local charter school is located shall be responsible for the financial support of such local charter school at a level that is at least equal to the product of (A) the per pupil cost for the prior fiscal year, less the reimbursement pursuant to section 10-76g for the current fiscal year, and (B) the number of students attending such local charter school in the current fiscal year.”</p> <p>“For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014, and each fiscal year thereafter, the State Board of Education may approve, within available appropriations, a per student grant to a local charter school described in subsection (c) of section 10-66bb in an amount not to exceed three thousand dollars for each student enrolled in such local charter school, provided the local or regional board of education for such local charter school and the representatives of the exclusive bargaining unit for certified employees, chosen pursuant to section 10-153b, mutually agree on staffing flexibility in such local charter school, and such agreement is approved by the State Board of Education” Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 10-66ee(b-c) (West).</p>
<p>FACILITIES FUNDS</p>	<p>New charters are eligible for a one-time grant of \$500,000 for facilities. Twenty million dollars in bond financing is available to charters through a competitive application. There is also a pilot program to provide \$25 million in bond financing. [Conn. Gen Stat. 10-66hh]</p>

## IMPLEMENTATION POINTS

<p>- 3</p>	<p>Three points are deducted because the state has imposed a de facto cap by neither encouraging nor approving charter applications.</p>
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LINK TO THE  
CONNECTICUT  
CHARTER  
SCHOOL LAW