



Iowa has consistently had one of the weakest charter laws in the country and the law is often considered one in name only. Charters are not separate, independent public schools, but operate more like alternative district schools.

INDEPENDENT OR MULTIPLE AUTHORIZERS - NO	
APPROVAL	State Board of Education approves all charter school applicants after the school board approves the application.
APPEAL	Schools denied by the school board may appeal to the state board and their decision is binding.
OPERATIONAL AUTONOMY	
STATE	Limited. A charter school is exempt by law from some statutes and regulations applicable to public schools. However, charters still must comply with extensive regulations, including paperwork, personnel policies and transportation. Virtual charter schools are not mentioned in the law, and while there are no virtual charters, it does not appear to be against the law to create one. Education service providers are also not discussed in the law, and charter schools can enter into contracts without restrictions.
LOCAL	No. Charters must remain a legal part of the school district and must therefore follow all local rules and regulations, including programs, transportation of students, personnel, rules, etc.
TEACHER FREEDOM	No. Teachers are considered employees of the district. Teachers are required to participate in state's retirement program.
NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ALLOWED	
CAP	No legal limit on number of schools that may be approved.
EQUITY	
STUDENT FUNDING	Funds pass through district. Funding is completely ignored in the law, leaving it up to district's discretion, which ensures that charter schools are not being funded equitably.  "A charter school shall be considered a part of the school district in which it is located for purposes of state school foundation aid pursuant to chapter 257." Iowa Code Ann. § 256F.4(6) (West).
FACILITIES FUNDS	No Additional Funds.
IMPLEMENTATION POINTS	
- 3	Three points are deducted because the state has imposed a de facto cap by not encouraging or working to improve the charter environment.

[LINK TO THE IOWA CHARTER SCHOOL LAW](#)