

INDIANA

(Law passed in 2001; 3rd strongest of the nation's 43 charter laws)

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There have been numerous positive changes to Indiana's charter school law in recent years, making Indiana's charter law one of the strongest in the country. The addition of independent authorizers, such as the Indiana Charter School Board, and the removal of all caps on the number of schools has contributed to its strength. Charters also have a large level of autonomy from state and district regulations. In 2014, additional changes were made to create incentives for failing schools to partner with charters. While funding is still less per pupil than traditional public school students and facilities funding has not been consistent causing a hardship to charters, the Hoosier State remains at the head of the class.

INDEPENDENT OR MULTIPLE AUTHORIZERS - YES (4)

APPROVAL	School boards, public four-year state universities, nonprofit colleges that provide a four-year baccalaureate degree program or advanced degrees, and the mayor of Indianapolis can all serve as authorizers. The Indiana Charter School Board is an independent entity that may authorize charters statewide.
APPEAL	Yes. If an application is rejected, it may be submitted to another sponsor or the state Charter School Review Panel. The Panel may approve the proposal, which is then considered conditionally approved, and upon written notice from the organizer that an eligible sponsor has agreed to serve as a sponsor for the proposal, it receives final approval from the panel.

OPERATIONAL AUTONOMY

STATE	Yes. Charters receive a blanket waiver from most rules and regulations governing traditional public schools. Virtual schools are allowed. Management contracts with ESPs are not restricted but additional paperwork is required between the charter school and the provider.
LOCAL	Yes. Blanket waiver provides some flexibility from local district regulations, although conversion charters do have to adhere to more rules regarding teachers and employment.
TEACHER FREEDOM	Yes. Teachers may negotiate as a separate unit, or work independently. Each charter may participate in state's retirement system, or establish a retirement system for its employees.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ALLOWED

CAP	There is no legal limit on number of charter schools that may be approved. Sixty percent of students enrolled in virtual charters for the first time must be included in the state's ADM count for the previous school year, limiting the growth of virtual schools.
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EQUITY

<p>STUDENT FUNDING</p>	<p>Funds pass from the state and district. Charters receive the same state formula aid as traditional schools (virtuals receive less.) A complex formula often results in discrepancies, particularly with local funding. Independent authorizers can withhold up to three percent of funding for administrative fees.</p> <p>“The department shall distribute to the organizer the state tuition support distribution. The department shall make a distribution under this subsection at the same time and in the same manner as the department makes a distribution of state tuition support under IC 20-43-2 to other school corporations... (b) Beginning not more than sixty (60) days after the department receives the information reported under section 2(a) [IC 20-24-7-2(a)] of this chapter, the department shall distribute to the organizer:</p> <p>(1) tuition support and other state funding for any purpose for students enrolled in the conversion charter school; (2) a proportionate share of state and federal funds received...(3) a proportionate share of funds received under federal or state categorical aid programs for students who are eligible for the federal or state categorical aid and are enrolled in the conversion charter school.” [Ind. Code Ann. § 20-24-7-2 and 3]</p> <p>“For state fiscal years beginning after June 30, 2013, a virtual charter school is entitled to receive funding in a month from the state in an amount equal to the sum of:</p> <p>(1) the product of:</p> <p>(A) the number of students included in the virtual charter school’s current ADM; multiplied by</p> <p>(B) the result of:</p> <p>(i) ninety percent (90%) of the school’s foundation amount determined under IC 20-43-5-4; divided by</p> <p>(ii) twelve (12); plus</p> <p>(2) the total of any:</p> <p>(A) special education grants under IC 20-43-7;</p> <p>(B) career and technical education grants under IC 20-43-8;</p> <p>(C) honor grants under IC 20-43-10;</p> <p>(D) complexity grants under IC 20-43-13; and</p> <p>(E) full-day kindergarten grants under IC 20-43-14;</p> <p>to which the virtual charter school is entitled for the month” Ind. Code Ann. § 20-24-7-13 (West).</p>
<p>FACILITIES FUNDS</p>	<p>Charter school facilities assistance program to make grants and loans is available to charter schools for the purpose of constructing, purchasing, renovating and maintaining facilities. Indiana provided \$17 million to this program in 2011, although funds for the grant program have run out, the loan program continues. [Ind. Code Ann. § 20-24-12-4]</p>

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