

MINNESOTA

(Law passed in 1991; 2nd strongest of the nation's 43 charter laws)

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The first state to introduce charter schools to the U.S., and the world, teeters close in this ranking for the #1 slot. Minnesota continues to have one of the strongest charter school laws in the country with many major high-quality components: a variety of responsible authorizers, blanket waivers from most rules and regulations, equitable funding and facilities assistance.

INDEPENDENT OR MULTIPLE AUTHORIZERS - YES (3)

APPROVAL	School boards, intermediate school boards, cooperatives, public and private colleges and universities, and “charitable” nonprofit organizations that meet certain criteria can all be authorizers, subject to final commissioner of education approval.
APPEAL	None.

OPERATIONAL AUTONOMY

STATE	Yes, but limited. Charter schools do receive a blanket waiver from most state rules and regulations governing traditional public schools. Virtual schools are allowed. Management contracts with ESPs are not restricted, although there are additional conflict of interest rules and evaluation criteria in place. All current and would-be authorizers must meet a variety of statutes governing operations and performance, which comes with increased oversight by the State Department of Education.
LOCAL	Yes. The blanket waiver provision also applies to local rules and regulations governing traditional public schools. Charter schools are their own LEAs.
TEACHER FREEDOM	Yes. Teachers may remain covered by a district collective bargaining agreement if all parties agree, may negotiate as a separate unit with the governing body, or work independently. Charter schools must participate in the state’s retirement system.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ALLOWED

CAP	There is no legal limit on the number of schools that may be approved.
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MINNESOTA

(Continued)

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EQUITY

STUDENT FUNDING

All funds pass through the state. Charters earn per-pupil general education revenue as if it was a school district except for transportation funds (approximately \$500 per student), unless the charter provides it. It is intended that a charter will receive all special education funds, and other aids, grants and revenue as if it were a school district. Charters cannot directly use state money to purchase land or buildings; must create affiliated nonprofit and meet certain criteria to do so.

“General education revenue must be paid to a charter school as though it were a district. The general education revenue for each adjusted marginal cost pupil unit is the state average general education revenue per pupil unit, plus the referendum equalization aid allowance in the pupil’s district of residence, minus an amount equal to the product of the formula allowance according to section 126C.10, subdivision 2, times .0485, calculated without basic skills revenue, extended time revenue, alternative teacher compensation revenue, transition revenue, and transportation sparsity revenue, plus basic skills revenue, extended time revenue, basic alternative teacher compensation aid according to section 126C.10, subdivision 34, and transition revenue as though the school were a school district. The general education revenue for each extended time marginal cost pupil unit equals \$4,794.” Minn. Stat. Ann. § 124D.11 (West).

FACILITIES FUNDS

Yes. The state provides lease aid to charter schools in the amount of 90 percent of lease costs, up to \$1,314 dollars per pupil. Charters that own their own building cannot receive lease aid, but if the charter creates an affiliated nonprofit to buy a building, they can secure financing this way. Minn. Stat. Ann. § 124D.11 (West).

IMPLEMENTATION POINTS

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One point is awarded for the state’s responsible authorizing – opening strong charter schools while holding current charters accountable to their contracts and closing them as necessary.

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