

# OREGON

(Law passed in 1999; 18th weakest of the nation's 43 charter laws)

Oregon has a weaker charter school law, largely because only school boards are allowed to authorize schools. Although the school boards have been active in their approval of schools totaling 125, the funding for charter school students is far from equitable as districts can take up to 20 percent of their funding in fees. The freedom of charter schools is limited because while they do receive a blanket waiver from most rules and regulations, there are restrictions on online/blended schools and district boards maintain power.

## INDEPENDENT OR MULTIPLE AUTHORIZERS – NO

APPROVAL	School boards are the only authorizers in the state.
APPEAL	Yes. Applications that are denied by the school board may be appealed to the State Board of Education or a college or university, which may become the sponsor of the application if it is approved.

## OPERATIONAL AUTONOMY

STATE	Yes. Charters do receive a blanket waiver from most traditional public school rules and regulations. Virtual schools are allowed but there are operational restrictions. Management contracts with for-profit ESPs have additional regulations that contracts with nonprofit organizations do not.
LOCAL	Limited. Charters do receive a waiver from some local rules and regulations, but school boards still have some discretion regarding funding and special education, for example.
TEACHER FREEDOM	Yes. Teachers may negotiate as a separate unit with the charter school governing body, or work independently. Employees are required to participate in the retirement system.

## NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ALLOWED

CAP	No cap on the number of charter schools that can open. For online schools, no more than three percent of a district's students can enroll in a virtual school not sponsored by their district without permission from their home district. A state appeal is possible if the district rejects the permission.
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(Continued)



## EQUITY

STUDENT FUNDING	<p>Funds pass through the school district. Per-pupil funding is 80 percent of the weighted average daily maintenance formula for students in K-8 and 95 percent of the formula for students in grades 9-12. This formula assumes a charter serves the same percentage of low-income students as the district, which often results in inequity. Special education funds are given to the school district and the law sets a minimum percentage that districts must give to charters. Authorizers can retain up to 20 percent of funding for "administrative" fees, which results in a huge funding disparity between charter schools and traditional public schools.</p> <p>"A school district shall contractually establish, with any public charter school that is sponsored by the board of the school district, payment for provision of educational services to the public charter school's students. The payment shall equal an amount per weighted average daily membership (ADMw) of the public charter school that is at least equal to: (a) Eighty percent of the amount of the school district's General Purpose Grant per ADMw as calculated under ORS 327.013 for students who are enrolled in kindergarten through grade eight; and (b) Ninety-five percent of the amount of the school district's General Purpose Grant per ADMw as calculated under ORS 327.013 for students who are enrolled in grades 9 through 12." [ORS § 338.155(2)]</p>
FACILITIES FUNDS	No Additional Funds.

LINK TO THE  
OREGON CHARTER  
SCHOOL LAW