

ARIZONA

(Law passed in 1994; last amended in 2011;
4th strongest of the nation's 42 charter laws)

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539 charters serving 135,930 students.

173 charter schools closed as of December 2011.

NOTEWORTHY

BASIS Charter School of Tucson is annually named one of the top public high schools in the country by *Newsweek* and *U.S. News & World Report*. It offers a rigorous curriculum and high standards, and because of its success, is opening schools in Washington, DC and Indiana.

INDEPENDENT OR MULTIPLE AUTHORIZERS - YES (4)

APPROVAL	School boards. The State Board for Charter Schools, an independent board. Public universities, community college or group of community colleges with at least 15,000 students enrolled. The State Department of Education may approve applications, but has chosen not to since 2003.
APPEAL	None. The only recourse is to revise and re-submit application for reconsideration.

OPERATIONAL AUTONOMY

STATE	Yes. Blanket waiver from most rules and regulations governing traditional public schools. Virtual schools are allowed. Management contracts with ESPs are not restricted.
LOCAL	Yes. However, charters are included in district's budget, and fiscal autonomy depends on the school district's control.
TEACHER FREEDOM	Yes. Teachers may work independently of district contract work rules. Charter schools have the option to participate in the state's retirement system.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ALLOWED

CAP	Schools approved by universities and community colleges are limited to four in FY 2013. No other caps.
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EQUITY

<p>STUDENT FUNDING</p>	<p>For charters authorized by school boards, funds pass through the district. For all others, funds pass through the state. Funding disparities exist because some categories used to calculate funds for conventional schools are not used for charters. Inequitable funding has resulted in various lawsuits throughout the years.</p> <p>“For district schools, the charter shall include a description of the methods of funding the charter school by the school district. The school district shall send a copy of the charter and application, including a description of how the school district plans to fund the school, to the state board of education before the start of the first fiscal year of operation of the charter school. For state schools, the charter school shall calculate a base support level as prescribed in section 15-943. The student count shall be determined initially using an estimated student count based on actual registration of pupils before the beginning of the school year. After the first one hundred days or two hundred days in session, as applicable, the charter school shall revise the student count to be equal to the actual average daily membership.” [AZ Stat. 15-185(A) to (B)]</p>
<p>FACILITIES FUNDS</p>	<p>Yes. Charter schools receive equalization assistance to help with facilities and other overhead costs. Charters receive \$1,607 per pupil for students in K-8 and \$1,873 per pupil for students in grades 9-12. [AZ Stat. 15-185(B)4]</p>

IMPLEMENTATION POINTS

<p>- 1</p>	<p>One point is deducted due to capped and slow implementation of university and community college charter authorizers.</p>
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[LINK TO THE ARIZONA CHARTER SCHOOL LAW](#)