

CALIFORNIA

(Law passed in 1992; last amended in 2010; 7th strongest of the nation's 42 charter laws)



1,008 charters serving 410,157 students.

185 charter schools closed as of December 2011.

NOTEWORTHY

KIPP Empower uses both computers and live teaching, a technique called blended learning, to help Los Angeles kindergarteners achieve academic success. Although only nine percent of the students tested “kindergarten ready” upon entry to the school, and 94 percent qualify for free or reduced-price lunch based on their family incomes, 95 percent of KIPP Empower kindergarteners tested above the national average in math and 96 percent tested above the average in reading at the end of their first year.

INDEPENDENT OR MULTIPLE AUTHORIZERS - YES (2)

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| APPROVAL | School boards and county boards. A charter can apply directly to the State Board of Education if its schools will provide instructional services that may have impact statewide, not just within one district. If approved, school may operate multiple campuses throughout the state. The state board has not approved any statewide charters since High Tech High in 2006 (grade expansion in 2009) and Aspire Schools in 2007. |
| APPEAL | Yes. Applications denied by the school board may be appealed to the county board or the State Board of Education. Decisions by the state board are subject to judicial review and are binding, and the entity that approves the application becomes the school's sponsor. |

OPERATIONAL AUTONOMY

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| STATE | Yes. Blanket waiver from most rules and regulations governing traditional public schools. Virtual schools are allowed. Management contracts with ESPs are not restricted, but are heavily regulated. |
| LOCAL | Yes. Blanket waiver applies to most local policies. Fiscal autonomy is subject to the district's terms and specified in the charter. |
| TEACHER FREEDOM | Yes. Teachers may remain covered by the district bargaining agreement, negotiate as a separate unit with the charter school governing body, or work independently. If a charter school chooses to participate in the state teachers' retirement system, all qualified employees shall be covered. |

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ALLOWED

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| CAP | One hundred additional charters added each year. Unused charters roll over to the following year. |
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EQUITY

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| <p>STUDENT FUNDING</p> | <p>Funds pass through the district. Charters receive per pupil funding and additional categorical grants and funds from a multi-tiered formula, including property taxes, state aid and lottery funds. Virtual schools receive base funding from a formula, which gives them less than conventional schools.</p> <p>“If an elementary school petitions either the governing board of the local school district or the State Board of Education to become a charter school, as specified in Section 47621 or 47622, that school shall receive state apportionments equal to the statewide average revenue limit for elementary schools plus funding as specified in paragraphs (2) and (3) of subdivision (a) of Section 47612. The superintendent shall annually compute the statewide average amount of general-purpose funding per unit of average daily attendance received by school districts for each of four grade level ranges. The superintendent shall apportion to each charter school this amount, less local funds allocated to the charter school pursuant to Section 47635. The State Board of Education shall adopt regulations setting forth criteria for the determination of funding for nonclassroom-based instruction.” [Cal Ed Code § 47623, 47634.1(c) and 47607(b)]</p> |
| <p>FACILITIES FUNDS</p> | <p>Propositions to help obtain facilities, but districts have not been following the letter of the law. No per pupil facilities funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposition 39 - School districts required to provide equivalent facilities to charter schools. • Propositions 1 and 47 - Charters may access facility funding directly from the state or through their school district. • The Charter School Revolving Loan Fund provides low-interest loans to new charter schools for facilities and other purposes. [Cal Ed Code § 41365] • The Charter School Facility Grant Program provides assistance with facilities, rent and lease costs for charter schools. Eligible schools can receive up to \$750 per unit of average daily attendance. [Cal Ed Code § 47614.5] |

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