

# COLORADO

(Law passed in 1993; last amended in 2008;  
9th strongest of the nation's 42 charter laws)



185 charters serving 79,963 students.

16 charter schools closed as of December 2011.

## NOTEWORTHY

Liberty Common High School, a parent-run charter school in Fort Collins, couples high academic achievement with an emphasis on a classical curriculum. Liberty, which opened in 1997, recently began an engineering partnership with Colorado State University that allows students to develop real-world engineering skills and interests in the classroom.

## INDEPENDENT OR MULTIPLE AUTHORIZERS - YES (2)

APPROVAL	School boards. The Colorado Charter School Institute (CCSI) may authorize schools only in districts that have not retained their exclusive authority to grant charters. (CCSI is not fully independent from state education department.)
APPEAL	Yes. Denied applications may be appealed to the State Board of Education, which may remand the decision back to the school board for reconsideration. A second denial may be appealed to the state board, which may instruct the local board to approve the charter. The decision of the state board shall be final and not subject to further review.

## OPERATIONAL AUTONOMY

STATE	Yes. Waiver requests considered by state on a case-by-case basis. Virtual schools are allowed. Management contracts with ESPs are not restricted.
LOCAL	Yes. Exemptions from district policies must be negotiated and specified in charter. Degree of fiscal autonomy depends on the school's sponsor.
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. Charter schools must participate in the state retirement system (or that of Denver if schools are in that jurisdiction).

## NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ALLOWED

CAP	No legal limit on number of schools that may be approved.
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## EQUITY

<p>STUDENT FUNDING</p>	<p>For district approved schools, funds pass through district. For CCSI sponsored schools, funds pass through the state. At least 95 percent of the average per pupil revenue follows students. In districts of 500 or fewer students, only 85 percent of the district per pupil revenue is guaranteed. Additional funding is negotiated with school sponsor. Law requires districts to invite charters to discuss facilities needs and may be included on bond request.</p> <p>“...each charter school and the authorizing school district shall negotiate funding under the contract at a minimum of ninety-five percent of the district per pupil revenues for each pupil enrolled in the charter school who is not an on-line pupil and one hundred percent of the district per pupil on-line funding for each on-line pupil enrolled in the charter school. The school district may choose to retain the actual amount of the charter school’s per pupil share of the central administrative overhead costs for services actually provided to the charter school; except that such amount shall not exceed five percent of the district per pupil revenues...” [C.R.S. 22-30.5-112(2)(a)(III)]</p>
<p>FACILITIES FUNDS</p>	<p>The Charter School Facilities Financing Act requires a portion of funds (currently \$5 million) to be distributed to charters for use in funding capital construction. Funding is currently only \$98 per pupil. [C.R.S. 22-30.5-401] In addition, the law requires the state to make direct payments of principal and interest on bonds on behalf of charter schools if certain terms are met. [C.R.S. 22-30.5-406]</p>

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