

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

(Law passed in 1996; last amended in 2008;
the strongest of the nation's 42 charter laws)

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107 charters serving 35,224 students.

30 charter schools closed as of December 2011.

41 percent of DC public school students are enrolled in charter schools.

NOTEWORTHY

Nearly 60 percent of the charter school campuses in DC showed improvement in reading and mathematics assessments. Achievement Prep Academy had the highest proficiency in math at the elementary level at 86.92 percent.

INDEPENDENT OR MULTIPLE AUTHORIZERS - YES

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| APPROVAL | The DC Public Charter School Board, an independent board, and the DC Board of Education are legally permitted to authorize. The DC Board relinquished its authority in 2006 and has since been replaced by the state education agency (SEA.) The DC City Council may designate an additional entity by enactment of a law. |
| APPEAL | None. |

OPERATIONAL AUTONOMY

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| STATE | Yes. Blanket waiver from all public school rules and regulations. The SEA has imposed additional regulations, regarding health and wellness, which has taken away autonomy from the school's day-to-day operations, curriculum and various unfunded mandates. Virtual schools are permitted. Management contracts with ESPs are not restricted. |
| LOCAL | Yes. Charters have control over budgeting, operations and personnel. |
| TEACHER FREEDOM | Yes. Teachers may negotiate as a separate unit, or work independently. A public charter school may establish a retirement system for employees or educators may choose to stay within the parameters of the DC government retirement system. |

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ALLOWED

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| CAP | Yes. Up to 20 charter schools per year may be authorized; unused charters roll over to the following year. |
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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

(Continued)



EQUITY

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| STUDENT FUNDING | <p>Funds pass through the District. Public charter schools are funded through the same formula and from the same streams that fund the traditional public school system in the District. Operating funds are commensurate with the public schools, however the District has withheld some categorical grants.</p> <p>“The DC Council in 1998 passed the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula for Public School and Public Charter Schools Act, which is the foundation of the funding formulas. The Act provides a foundation amount that increases annually to account for inflation, plus additional amounts depending on grade levels, limited English proficiency, summer school, special education and residential schools.” [D.C. Official Code § 38-2901 to 2912]</p> |
| FACILITIES FUNDS | <p>Yes. Charter schools receive a facilities allowance of \$3,000 per pupil. There is also a credit enhancement fund and a direct loan fund for construction, purchase, renovation or maintenance of facilities. [D.C. Official Code § 38-2908]</p> |

[LINK TO THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CHARTER SCHOOL LAW](#)