

GEORGIA

(Law passed in 1993; last amended in 2011;
20th strongest of the nation's 42 charter laws)

125 charters serving 61,821 students.

9 charter schools closed as of December 2011.

NOTEWORTHY

With the ruling that the Georgia Charter Schools Commission was unconstitutional, Ivy Preparatory Academy for Girls, a highly successful and needed charter school in Georgia became a "state special school" restricting its funding to the state portion only and thus less than half of what other public schools are entitled to receive. In addition, the companion all-boys school was rejected by the local board because of their continued opposition to charters.

INDEPENDENT OR MULTIPLE AUTHORIZERS - NO

APPROVAL	School boards. The State Board of Education may also approve districts to become a charter system.
APPEAL	Yes. The State Board of Education may approve a charter application on appeal after it has been denied by the school board. If a charter is approved on appeal, it becomes a "state special school," and receives only state, not local, funding.

OPERATIONAL AUTONOMY

STATE	Yes. Blanket waiver from most state rules and regulations governing traditional public schools. Virtual schools are allowed. Management contracts with ESPs are not restricted.
LOCAL	Charter schools may be exempt from some district rules. However, districts subject charters to extensive control and oversight.
TEACHER FREEDOM	Yes. Teachers are exempt from district work rules and negotiated agreements unless otherwise agreed to in district-awarded charter. All charters are required to participate in state retirement system.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ALLOWED

CAP	No legal limit on number of schools that may be approved.
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As of March 2012, the Georgia legislature has approved a measure that would allow voters to amend the state's constitution to permit charter schools to be authorized by multiple, independent entities other than local boards, as is the case in 16 other states. If passed, the ballot measure would supersede a decision by the Georgia Supreme Court (a decision which is considered narrow and political on the part of the elected court) that the chartering authority granted to the Georgia Charter Schools Commission by the legislature is unconstitutional.



EQUITY

<p>STUDENT FUNDING</p>	<p>For district charters, funds pass through the district. For all other schools, funds pass through the state. Charter schools treated “no less favorably” than conventional district schools. State’s basic funding formula (QBE) applies to all charters. School districts dictate funding for locally approved charter schools, often resulting in inequities. State chartered special schools receive only state and federal funds, not local.</p> <p>“Quality basic education formula applies; grants, local tax revenue, and funds from local bonds. (a) A local charter school shall be included in the allotment of QBE formula earnings, applicable QBE grants, applicable non-QBE state grants, and applicable federal grants to the local school system in which the local charter school is located under Article 6 of this chapter. The local board and the state board shall treat a conversion charter school no less favorably than other local schools located within the applicable local school system unless otherwise provided by law. The local board and the state board shall treat a start-up charter school no less favorably than other local schools within the applicable local system with respect to the provision of funds for instruction, school administration, transportation, food services, and, where feasible, building programs.” [O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2068.1]</p>
<p>FACILITIES FUNDS</p>	<p>Competitive need-based per-pupil facilities grant program. \$1.8 million was appropriated to this program for the 2011-12 school year. [O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2068.2]</p>

IMPLEMENTATION POINTS

<p>- 1</p>	<p>One point was deducted because of the ongoing reluctance of school districts to review, approve and support schools previously approved by the Commission.</p>
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[LINK TO THE GEORGIA CHARTER SCHOOL LAW](#)