

IOWA

(Law passed in 2002; last amended in 2010; 3rd weakest of the nation's 42 charter laws)



8 charters serving 1,179 students.

1 charter school closed as of December 2011.

NOTEWORTHY

Iowa charter schools are not separate, independent public schools, and the law is often considered one “in name only.” During the 2009 General Assembly, the state charter law was expanded to Innovation Zones, which are public attendance centers established by a consortium, which must include at least two school districts and an area education agency.

INDEPENDENT OR MULTIPLE AUTHORIZERS - NO

APPROVAL	State Board of Education with school board approval/designation.
APPEAL	None

OPERATIONAL AUTONOMY

STATE	Limited. Charters must comply with extensive regulations (paperwork, personnel policies, transport.) Virtual schools and management contracts with ESPs are not permitted.
LOCAL	No. Charters must comply with most local rules and regulations, including programs, transportation of students, personnel, rules, etc.
TEACHER FREEDOM	No. Teachers are considered employees of the district. Teachers are required to participate in state's retirement program.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ALLOWED

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

STUDENT FUNDING	Funds pass through district. Funding is ignored in law, leaving it up to district's discretion. “A charter school shall be considered a part of the school district in which it is located for purposes of state school foundation aid pursuant to chapter 257.” [Iowa Code § 256F]
FACILITIES FUNDS	No Additional Funds.

IMPLEMENTATION POINTS

- 3	Three points are deducted because the state has imposed a de facto cap by not encouraging or working to improve the charter environment.
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[LINK TO THE IOWA CHARTER SCHOOL LAW](#)