

MARYLAND

(Law passed in 2003; last amended in 2007; 6th weakest of the nation's 42 charter laws)



46 charters serving 11,549 students. (32 of 46 in Baltimore)

3 charter schools closed as of December 2011.

NOTEWORTHY

Charter applicants face enormous obstacles with school board hostilities and once open, are micromanaged and operationally limited. For the first time, a charter school in Montgomery County will open its doors this fall, Crossway Community Montessori Charter School, after a prolonged battle with the Montgomery County School Board and intervention by the State Board of Education. Frederick County will have its second in 2012, assuming the school board provides the needed approval for the school to obtain a facility.

INDEPENDENT OR MULTIPLE AUTHORIZERS - NO

APPROVAL	School boards. (The State Board of Education may authorize under limited circumstances involving the conversion of "restructured schools" if the county board fails to act on an application within 45 days. This has not yet occurred.)
APPEAL	Yes. If the school board denies an application, it may be appealed to the state board. The state board has no clear legal authority, but has the discretion to act as a mediator. Decision is non-binding.

OPERATIONAL AUTONOMY

STATE	No, not addressed. School districts maintain authority over charter schools and any contracts negotiated.
LOCAL	No. Each county board develops its own public charter school policy for schools in its district to follow.
TEACHER FREEDOM	No. Teachers remain covered by the district's collective bargaining contract. Charter schools must participate in the state's retirement system.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ALLOWED

CAP	Not prescribed. Left to discretion of school districts.
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EQUITY

STUDENT FUNDING	<p>Funds pass through district. A 2007 Maryland Court of Appeals ruling affirmed the State Board of Education's decision that the law requires charter students be funded in a "commensurate" manner and at the same level. Funding still rests first with the districts, which do not always respond favorably to charter schools.</p> <p>"In general. -- A county board shall disburse to a public charter school an amount of county, State, and federal money for elementary, middle, and secondary students that is commensurate with the amount disbursed to other public schools in the local jurisdiction." [Md. Educ. Code Ann. § 9-109]</p>
FACILITIES FUNDS	No Additional Funds.

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