

# OHIO

(Law passed in 1997; last amended in 2011; 15th strongest of the nation's 42 charter laws)



368 charters serving 122,660 students.

99 charter schools closed as of December 2011.

## NOTEWORTHY

Following reform of its law in 2003 to include an unbridled number of private non-profit groups to authorize schools, the state experienced a high degree of problems in its charter environment, with many authorizers and schools not qualified to do the work necessary. Advocates stepped in and put some necessary curbs on authorizing in 2005, although they also restricted some important schooling options, such as virtual programs. Now the state has in place new accountability provisions that are positively balancing out the previous generation of legislative changes.

## INDEPENDENT OR MULTIPLE AUTHORIZERS - YES (4)

APPROVAL	School boards including educational service centers; state universities; nonprofit entities as approved by the Ohio Department of Education; and the Department of Education itself. School boards only in "challenged" districts - those rated in the lowest five percent by the state's academic index. There are currently 37 "challenged" districts representing 18 percent of public school students in the state.
APPEAL	None

## OPERATIONAL AUTONOMY

STATE	Limited. Charter schools do receive a blanket waiver from most traditional public school rules, but additional restrictions and rules governing charters are imposed. Virtual schools are allowed, although no new ones may open. Management contracts with ESPs are not restricted. The Ohio Department of Education can close down a charter school if it has been labeled "academically failing" for two out of three years, or an authorizer if it has authorized too many failing schools.
LOCAL	Yes. Charters only follow rules imposed by their sponsors.
TEACHER FREEDOM	Yes for new starts; teachers may negotiate as a separate unit with the charter school governing body, or work independently. Conversion school employees are subject to collective bargaining, unless the mayor submits to the sponsor and the state employment relations board a statement requesting that all employees of the conversion charter school be removed from a collective bargaining unit. Charters are required to participate in relevant retirement system.

## NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ALLOWED

CAP	Yes. New starts can only open in the "challenged" districts. Moratorium on virtual schools through 2013. No cap on conversions. Each authorizer can approve up to 100 schools, except for the state department of education, which can approve no more than 20 schools each year during its initial five years of chartering, and of those 20, only five can be new start-ups.
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## EQUITY

STUDENT FUNDING	<p>Funds pass through state. Funding formula intended but often fails to distribute money to charters equitably. Funding varies by type of school.</p> <p>“An amount equal to the sum of the amounts obtained when, for each community school where the district’s students are enrolled, the number of the district’s students reported under divisions (B)(2)(a), (b), and (e) of this section who are enrolled in grades one through twelve, and one-half the number of students reported under those divisions who are enrolled in kindergarten, in that community school is multiplied by the sum of the base formula amount of that community school plus the per pupil amount of the base funding supplements specified in divisions (C)(1) to (4) of section 3317.012 of the Revised Code.” [OH 3314.08(C)(1)]</p>
FACILITIES FUNDS	None

## IMPLEMENTATION POINTS

+ 1	One point awarded for strong accountability measures by the state and by authorizers to ensure that charter schools are being held accountable to outlined performance and operational targets.
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[LINK TO THE OHIO  
CHARTER SCHOOL LAW](#)