

# OKLAHOMA

(Law passed in 1999; last amended in 2011;  
17th weakest of the nation's 42 charter laws)



19 charters serving 6,576 students.

2 charter schools closed as of December 2011.

## NOTEWORTHY

Improvements in the state's charter school law have been led by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Janet Barresi, who as a parent was largely responsible for influencing the adoption of the state's first charter bill and went on to start the first charter, Independence Charter Middle School, in the state. Oklahoma's nickname the Sooner State, fits this grassroots advocate's story.

## INDEPENDENT OR MULTIPLE AUTHORIZERS - YES (5)

APPROVAL	School boards. Universities meeting certain requirements (must be a public state university located in a school district with 5,000 or more students in counties with at least 500,000, shall have an accredited teacher education program, and have a campus located within the school district of the charter school.) Federally recognized Indian tribes currently operating a high school under BIA can open a charter if it offers native language immersion and is located on a reservation. State board can sponsor charters operated by the Office of Juvenile Affairs. Charter Schools Commission established to sponsor virtual schools.
APPEAL	None

## OPERATIONAL AUTONOMY

STATE	Yes. Charters receive a blanket waiver from traditional public school rules and regulations. Virtual schools are allowed. Management contracts with ESPs are not restricted.
LOCAL	Limited. Blanket waiver applies to some local education rules and regulations. Charters are their own LEA for the purpose of special education.
TEACHER FREEDOM	Yes. Teachers are exempt from district work rules and negotiated agreements unless otherwise agreed to in district-awarded charter. Charter school employees may participate in state retirement system.

## NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ALLOWED

CAP	Yes. Charters are unlimited in school districts with 5,000 or more students in counties with a total population of at least 500,000 (e.g. Oklahoma City and Tulsa.) Also unlimited in districts with a school on the school improvement list (currently 21 of 537 districts.)
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## EQUITY

<p>STUDENT FUNDING</p>	<p>Funds pass through the district for locally-approved charters. Charters receive funds from same state aid funding formula as conventional schools. Authorizer may deduct up to five percent administrative fees. Law grants authority to the state to determine district funding policy.</p> <p>“The student membership of the charter school shall be considered separate from the student membership of the district in which the charter school is located for the purpose of calculating weighted average daily membership pursuant to Section 18-201.1 of this title and state aid pursuant to Section 18-200.1 of this title. For charter schools sponsored by a board of education of a school district, the sum of the separate calculations for the charter school and the school district shall be used to determine the total State Aid allocation for the district in which the charter school is located. A charter school shall receive from the sponsoring school district, the State Aid revenue generated by its students for the applicable year, less up to five percent (5%) of the State Aid allocation, which may be retained by the school district as a fee for administrative services rendered.” [70 Okl. St. § 3-142(A)]</p>
<p>FACILITIES FUNDS</p>	<p>Yes. Incentive fund provides up to \$50,000 per school to cover costs of renovating or remodeling existing facilities, and any additional start-up costs they might have. [70 Okl. St. § 3-144]</p>

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