

RHODE ISLAND

(Law passed in 1995; last amended in 2011;
11th weakest of the nation's 42 charter laws)

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17 charters serving 3,817 students.

NOTEWORTHY

The creation of mayoral academies in Rhode Island was supposed to improve the ability of charter school organizations to open needed alternatives in the state. Instead, the academies are reportedly political. Charter operator Democracy Prep left the state because the regulatory environment, specifically regarding hiring and firing of teachers, was too restrictive.

INDEPENDENT OR MULTIPLE AUTHORIZERS - NO

APPROVAL	State Board of Regents, after the charter has been approved by the local school committee or the state Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. Mayoral academies may be created by a mayor (who may work with a nonprofit organization) applying directly to Regents.
APPEAL	None

OPERATIONAL AUTONOMY

STATE	No. Waiver requests considered on a case-by-case basis. Virtual schools are not allowed. Contracts or ESP partnerships limited to mayoral academies.
LOCAL	No. Waiver requests considered on a case-by-case basis. Fiscal autonomy subject to district terms. Mayoral academies have more freedoms than other charter schools regarding personnel.
TEACHER FREEDOM	No. Teachers are covered by district bargaining agreements. Mayoral academy employees exempt from collective bargaining. Charter schools must participate in state's retirement system.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ALLOWED

CAP	Yes. Thirty five charters allowed in state and half must be reserved for at-risk students.
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RHODE ISLAND

(Continued)

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EQUITY

STUDENT FUNDING	<p>Funds pass through the district and state. The weighted student formula, which began in the 2011-12 school year uses the same funding formula as conventional schools. Local monies will come direct from the district. State deducts five percent from the formula and gives that money to the school district as impact aid.</p> <p>“It is the intent of the general assembly that funding pursuant to this chapter shall be neither a financial incentive nor a financial disincentive to the establishment of an independent charter school. Funding for each independent charter school shall consist of state revenue and municipal or district revenue in the same proportions that funding is provided for other schools within the sending school district(s). (b) The amount of funding which shall be allocated to the independent charter school by the sending school district(s) shall be equal to a percentage of the total budgeted expenses of the sending school district(s) which is determined by dividing the number of students enrolled in the district charter school by the total resident average daily number of students in the sending school district(s). [§ RI 16-77.3-5]</p>
FACILITIES FUNDS	No Additional Funds.

[LINK TO THE RHODE ISLAND CHARTER SCHOOL LAW](#)