

SOUTH CAROLINA

(Law passed in 1996; last amended in 2008;
17th strongest of the nation's 42 charter laws)



48 charters serving 18,171 students.

13 charter schools closed as of December 2011.

NOTEWORTHY

Greenville Technical Charter High, one of the first schools in the state and a leader in the fight for an improved, expanded law, was among five South Carolina schools chosen as winners of the 2010 National Blue Ribbon Schools Award. Many students who graduate Greenville Tech have received enough credits to enter college as sophomores.

INDEPENDENT OR MULTIPLE AUTHORIZERS - YES (2)

APPROVAL	School boards. South Carolina Public Charter School District (SCPCSD) for new starts only. School boards are given authority to appeal decisions by the SCPCSD.
APPEAL	Yes. Applications denied by the school board or SCPCSD may be appealed to the Administrative Law Courts.

OPERATIONAL AUTONOMY

STATE	Yes. Most schools receive a blanket waiver from most traditional public school rules and regulations. SCPCSD is its own LEA and may create and modify rules as necessary. Virtual schools are allowed. Management contracts with ESPs are not restricted.
LOCAL	Limited. The language in the law permits the district to have excessive control over charter operations. Local program funding often carries operational restrictions.
TEACHER FREEDOM	Yes for new starts; teachers are exempt from district work rules and negotiated agreements unless otherwise agreed to in district-awarded charter. No for conversions; original staff remains covered by the district employment policy. For new starts, employees may choose whether or not to participate in the retirement system. Original staff at conversions is required to remain covered by the retirement system.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ALLOWED

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

(Continued)



EQUITY

STUDENT FUNDING	<p>Funds pass through the district. SCPCSD-authorized schools receive only state and federal funds. The average SCPCSD school receives substantially less than conventional schools. In districts, the state's complex formula involving dozens of budget categories allows school district manipulation.</p> <p>"A local school board of trustees sponsor shall distribute state, county, and school district funds to a charter school as determined by the following formula: the previous year's audited total general fund revenues, divided by the previous year's weighted students, then increased by the Education Finance Act inflation factor, pursuant to Section 59-20-40, for the years following the audited expenditures, then multiplied by the weighted students enrolled in the charter school, which will be subject to adjustment for student attendance and state budget allocations based on the same criteria as the local school district. These amounts must be verified by the State Department of Education before the first disbursement of funds. (B) The South Carolina Public Charter School District shall receive and distribute state funds to the charter school as determined by the following formula: the current year's base student cost, as funded by the General Assembly, multiplied by the weighted students enrolled in the charter school, which must be subject to adjustment for student attendance and state budget allocations. These state funds are in addition to other funds to be received and distributed by the South Carolina Public Charter School District pursuant to subsections (C) and (D) of this section and Section 59-40-220(A). However, the South Carolina Public Charter School District may not retain more than two percent of its gross revenue for its internal administrative and operating expenses." [S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40-140]</p>
FACILITIES FUNDS	No Additional Funds.

As this report went to press, a bill was under consideration in South Carolina to amend the charter school law. If passed, it is unclear at this time if it would make a material change in the state score and overall ranking of South Carolina.

[LINK TO THE SOUTH CAROLINA CHARTER SCHOOL LAW](#)