

TENNESSEE

(Law passed in 2002; last amended in 2011; 21st strongest of the nation's 42 charter laws)

35 charters serving 7,210 students.

2 charter schools closed as of December 2011.

NOTEWORTHY

Improvements in the law spurred by the 2010 Race to the Top are noteworthy for generating changes in chartering, but the impact has been far less than what was expected by a lifting of the cap and enrollment restrictions.

INDEPENDENT OR MULTIPLE AUTHORIZERS - YES (2)

APPROVAL	School boards and the newly-created Achievement School District (ASD), where applications for new and conversion charter schools can apply. The ASD is similar to the RSD in Louisiana to help in areas of the state with a demonstrated history of failing schools.
APPEAL	Yes. Applications denied by the local board may be appealed to the State Board of Education. The state board's decision is binding.

OPERATIONAL AUTONOMY

STATE	No. Waiver requests considered on a case-by-case basis. Virtual schools are not allowed. Management contracts with ESPs restricted to nonprofits.
LOCAL	No. Waiver requests considered on a case-by-case basis. Districts can reject charter applications for being a "financial burden." Enrollment restricted to jurisdiction of approving LEA.
TEACHER FREEDOM	Yes for new schools; teachers work independently with charter school governing body unless otherwise specified by district-approved charter. Charters are required to participate in retirement systems.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ALLOWED

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

(Continued)



EQUITY

STUDENT FUNDING	<p>Funds pass through the district. Funding formula is now based on per-pupil revenue, not expenditures as in past years, which helps increase potential for equity. Lack of transparency in budgeting process.</p> <p>“A local board of education shall allocate to the charter school an amount equal to the per student state and local funds received by the LEA and all appropriate allocations under federal law or regulation...At a minimum, the rules should provide that: 1) Allocations shall be based on one hundred percent (100%) of state and local funds received by the LEA, including current funds allocated for capital outlay purposes...Allocations to the charter school may not be reduced by the LEA for administrative, indirect or any other category of cost except as provided in charter agreement.” [Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-13-112]</p>
FACILITIES FUNDS	<p>Capital outlay funding based on average daily membership under the basic education program to be used solely for charter facilities. Some LEAs may match funding. State portion is about \$100 per student. [Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-13-112 (2)(3)]</p>

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