

WISCONSIN

(Law passed in 1993; last amended in 2011;
16th strongest of the nation's 42 charter laws)

256 charters serving 47,352
students.

54 charter schools closed as of
December 2011.

NOTEWORTHY

Charter schools are not just about high-achieving academics; they also give choices to those students with learning disabilities or low self-esteem because of excessive bullying by other students. The Alliance School in Milwaukee exists as a safe haven for 175 students, in grades six through 12 who have undergone extreme bullying at their old schools. This school was Wisconsin's 2011 Charter School of the Year Platinum Award, and has been featured on 20/20 and in *Time Magazine* for their acceptance of bullied teens.

INDEPENDENT OR MULTIPLE AUTHORIZERS - (LIMITED)

APPROVAL	School boards for entire state. In Milwaukee, the City of Milwaukee, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and Milwaukee Area Technical College may approve schools. In Racine, the University of Wisconsin-Parkside can authorize one school.
APPEAL	Yes. Applications denied by the school board may be appealed to the State Department of Education and its decision is binding.

OPERATIONAL AUTONOMY

STATE	Yes. Blanket waiver from most state rules and regulations that apply to public schools. Virtual schools are allowed. Management contracts with ESPs are not restricted.
LOCAL	Yes. Freedom from most local rules and regulations, except regarding personnel policies. The school board may designate a charter as an "instrumentality" of the school district or not, which determines if it may hire staff and whether it is covered by the district bargaining agreement.
TEACHER FREEDOM	Yes for "non-instrumentality" charters; teachers are not district employees and may negotiate as a separate unit, or work independently. No for "instrumentality" charters; teachers remain covered by district collective bargaining agreement, but may organize as separate unit. Charter schools must participate in state's retirement system.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ALLOWED

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

STUDENT FUNDING	<p>Funds pass through the authorizer of the charter, usually the local board. Charter funding determined by the authorizer. Vague formula based on previous school's year per pupil funding results in inequity. No discussion of additional funding for special education, low-income, ELL, or other types of students.</p> <p>“From the appropriation under s. 20.255 (2) (fm), the department shall pay to the operator of the charter school an amount equal to the sum of the amount paid per pupil under this paragraph in the previous school year and the increase in the per pupil amount paid to private schools under s. 119.23 (4) (b) or in the current school year as compared to the previous school year, multiplied by the number of pupils attending the charter school. The amount paid per pupil may not be less than the amount paid per pupil under this paragraph in the previous school year.” [WI Statute 118.40 (2r) (3)(e)(2m)]</p>
FACILITIES FUNDS	No Additional Funds.

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