

Center for Education Reform



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THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN; NEW YORK'S CHARTER LAW MAKES TOP TEN IN NATIONAL RANKING

Washington, DC: Joining 34 other states that have passed charter school laws since 1991, the Empire State's December 1998 charter law has been ranked as one of the top ten strongest of the nation's charter laws, according to official rankings by the Center for Education Reform. Charter schools are public schools that abide by health, safety and civil rights regulations, but are free to meet the standards of their contract in the best way they can. Charter schools are open to all children.

"New York gets a lucky seven in terms of charter viability," said CER president Jeanne Allen, putting it less than a tenth of a point behind Minnesota, but ahead of other huge states such as California, Florida and Texas.

"The strength of New York's charter school law is owing to the tenacity of Governor George Pataki, who despite pressure to retreat, chose to stick to his guns," said Allen. "This paves the way for civic-minded citizens across the state to join in the effort to provide quality, public education to children who need it the most."

Among the features meriting its high national ranking, New York's charter school law provides for 100 new schools, multiple approval agencies (authorizers) beyond school boards, blanket waivers from state and district rules, and complete fiscal autonomy.

However, states like Massachusetts provide even greater potential for high quality charter schools, by allowing for freedom from rigid teacher certification rules and guaranteeing that charters will get full per pupil funding, equal to that of other public schools.

This is the third edition of *Charter School Laws Across the States: State by State Ranking and Legislative Profiles* the Center for Education Reform has published since it began assessing the relative strength and weakness of each charter school law. Strong laws tend to encourage more activity, are home to larger numbers of high quality schools, and reduce the amount of bureaucratic tinkering. The complete analysis of all charter school laws, including NY, is available by contacting the Center for Education Reform at 800-521-2118 or visiting the Center's web-site at www.edreform.com.

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The Center for Education Reform is a national, independent, non-profit advocacy organization founded in 1993 to provide support and guidance to individuals, community and civic groups, policymakers and others who are working to bring fundamental reforms to their schools.