

## WHAT MAKES A STRONG CHARTER SCHOOL LAW?

*There are 10 criteria for a strong charter school law:*

- 1) **Number of schools:** States that permit an unlimited or substantial number of autonomous charter schools encourage more activity than states that either limit the number of autonomous schools.
- 2) **Multiple chartering authorities / binding appeals process:** States that permit a number of entities in addition to or instead of local school boards to authorize charter schools, or that provide applicants with a binding appeals process, encourage more activity.
- 3) **Variety of applicants:** States that permit a variety of individuals and groups both inside and outside the existing public school system to start charter schools encourage more activity than states that limit eligible applicants to public schools or public school personnel.
- 4) **New starts:** States that permit new schools to start up encourage more activity than those that permit only public school conversions.
- 5) **Schools may start without third-party consent:** States that permit charter schools to form without needing consent from competing districts or the general public encourage more activity than those that do not.
- 6) **Automatic waiver from laws and regulations:** States that provide automatic blanket waivers from most or all state and district education laws, regulations, and policies encourage more activity than states that provide no waivers or require charter schools to negotiate waivers on an issue-by issue basis.
- 7) **Legal / operational autonomy:** States that allow charter schools to be independent legal entities that can own property, sue and be sued, incur debt, control budget and personnel, and contract for services, encourage more activity than states in which charter schools remain under district jurisdiction. In addition, legal autonomy refers to the ability of charter schools to control their own enrollment numbers.
- 8) **Guaranteed full funding:** States where 100 percent of per-pupil funding automatically follows students enrolled in charter schools encourage more activity than states where the amount is automatically lower or negotiated with the district.
- 9) **Fiscal Autonomy:** States that give charter schools full control over their own budgets, without the district holding the funds, encourage more activity than states that do not.
- 10) **Exemption from collective bargaining agreements / district work rules:** States that give charter schools complete control over personnel decisions encourage more activity than states where charter school teachers must remain subject to the terms of district collective bargaining agreements or work rules.

# CHARTER SCHOOL LAWS

*A 2007 Progress Report*

## THE "A" LAWS HONOR ROLL

1. District of Columbia
2. Minnesota
3. Delaware
4. Arizona
5. Michigan
6. Indiana
7. California

## THE "B" LAWS HIGH ACHIEVERS

8. Colorado
9. Florida
10. Massachusetts
11. Pennsylvania
12. Ohio
13. New York
14. Missouri
15. North Carolina
16. Georgia
17. New Mexico
18. Oregon
19. Wisconsin
20. New Jersey
21. Oklahoma

## THE "C" LAWS NEEDS IMPROVEMENT


22. Texas
23. Idaho
24. South Carolina
25. Utah
26. Louisiana
27. Nevada
28. Illinois
29. New Hampshire
30. Arkansas
31. Connecticut
32. Tennessee

## THE "D" LAWS BARELY MAKING IT

33. Wyoming
34. Alaska
35. Hawaii
36. Maryland
37. Kansas
38. Virginia
39. Rhode Island

## THE "F" LAWS FLUNKED

40. Iowa
41. Mississippi

 indicates likely change in rank due to change in law or practice as of April 2, 2007

Stay tuned for the release of CER's annual state-by-state profiles and rankings of the nation's forty-one charter school laws.

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