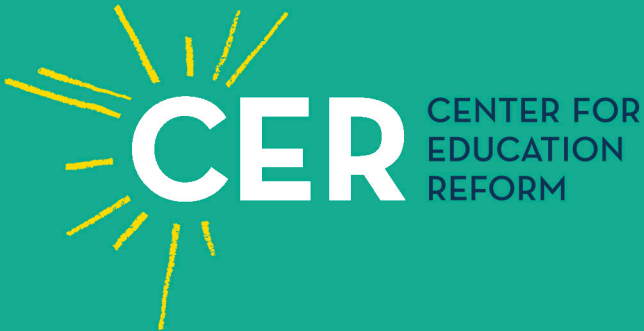


# NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL LAWS

## RANKING & SCORECARD — 2026



| Grade                                 |  | A               |         |        | B       |        |        |         |       |         |        |         |        |         |        |        |        |         |        | C     |        |        |        |        |        |       |      |       |        |       |       |    |
|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------|---------|--------|---------|--------|--------|---------|-------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|------|-------|--------|-------|-------|----|
| State                                 |  | FL              | AZ      | IN     | MI      | DC     | MN     | NC      | IA    | OH      | UT     | CO      | SC     | NY      | ID     | WI     | OK     | TX      | AR     | WV    | LA     | NV     | GA     | TN     | MO     | MT    | ND   | AL    | MA     | WY    | NH    |    |
| Year law passed                       |  | 1996            | 1994    | 2001   | 1993    | 1996   | 1991   | 1996    | 2002  | 1997    | 1998   | 1993    | 1995   | 1998    | 1998   | 1993   | 1999   | 1996    | 1995   | 2019  | 1995   | 1997   | 1993   | 2002   | 1998   | 2023  | 2025 | 2015  | 1993   | 1995  | 1995  |    |
| AUTHORIZATION                         |  | Possible Points |         |        |         |        |        |         |       |         |        |         |        |         |        |        |        |         |        |       |        |        |        |        |        |       |      |       |        |       |       |    |
| Multiple authorizers                  |  | 0 - 5           | 5       | 5      | 5       | 5      | 3      | 4       | 2     | 4       | 4      | 5       | 2      | 4       | 4      | 4      | 5      | 3       | 2      | 2     | 4      | 2      | 4      | 3      | 3      | 3     | 2    | 2     | 3      | 2     | 2     | 1  |
| Authorizer activity                   |  | 0 - 3           | 2       | 2      | 3       | 1      | 0      | 1       | 0     | 2       | 2      | 2       | 1      | 2       | 1      | 2      | 2      | 2       | 1      | 1     | 1      | 1      | 1      | 1      | 2      | 0     | 0    | 2     | 0      | 0     | 0     |    |
| Independence of local/state authority |  | 0 - 7           | 5       | 6      | 6       | 7      | 3      | 3       | 5     | 5       | 3      | 5       | 5      | 3       | 5      | 5      | 4      | 5       | 3      | 2     | 5      | 3      | 5      | 5      | 2      | 3     | 3    | 5     | 2      | 2     | 5     | 2  |
| Authorization Subtotal                |  | 0 - 15          | 12      | 13     | 14      | 13     | 6      | 8       | 7     | 11      | 9      | 12      | 8      | 9       | 10     | 11     | 11     | 10      | 6      | 5     | 10     | 6      | 10     | 9      | 6      | 8     | 5    | 7     | 7      | 4     | 7     | 3  |
| GROWTH                                |  |                 |         |        |         |        |        |         |       |         |        |         |        |         |        |        |        |         |        |       |        |        |        |        |        |       |      |       |        |       |       |    |
| Charter cap                           |  | 0 - 10          | 10      | 10     | 10      | 10     | 9      | 10      | 10    | 10      | 9      | 7       | 10     | 10      | 5      | 10     | 8      | 5       | 6      | 10    | 4      | 10     | 10     | 10     | 10     | 6     | 7    | 10    | 10     | 3     | 10    | 10 |
| Scaling up                            |  | 0 - 5           | 5       | 4      | 3       | 2      | 1      | 3       | 4     | 2       | 2      | 3       | 3      | 3       | 3      | 3      | 2      | 3       | 2      | 3     | 1      | 3      | 3      | 2      | 3      | 2     | 1    | 0     | 1      | 3     | 1     | 1  |
| Growth Subtotal                       |  | 0 - 15          | 15      | 14     | 13      | 12     | 10     | 13      | 14    | 12      | 11     | 10      | 13     | 13      | 8      | 13     | 10     | 8       | 8      | 13    | 5      | 13     | 13     | 12     | 13     | 8     | 8    | 10    | 11     | 6     | 11    | 11 |
| OPERATIONS                            |  |                 |         |        |         |        |        |         |       |         |        |         |        |         |        |        |        |         |        |       |        |        |        |        |        |       |      |       |        |       |       |    |
| School autonomy                       |  | 0 - 8           | 7       | 6      | 7       | 4      | 6      | 5       | 5     | 5       | 4      | 4       | 5      | 5       | 7      | 4      | 6      | 5       | 6      | 4     | 7      | 5      | 2      | 3      | 4      | 4     | 6    | 5     | 5      | 5     | 2     | 6  |
| States allow freedom to innovate      |  | 0 - 7           | 5       | 7      | 4       | 6      | 6      | 5       | 6     | 6       | 5      | 5       | 5      | 5       | 4      | 4      | 5      | 4       | 4      | 6     | 5      | 5      | 3      | 4      | 2      | 5     | 6    | 4     | 2      | 5     | 4     | 5  |
| Teacher freedom                       |  | 0 - 5           | 5       | 5      | 4       | 3      | 5      | 3       | 4     | 4       | 3      | 4       | 4      | 5       | 3      | 3      | 3      | 5       | 5      | 5     | 4      | 3      | 3      | 3      | 4      | 3     | 5    | 3     | 5      | 4     | 3     | 4  |
| Operations Subtotal                   |  | 0 - 20          | 17      | 18     | 15      | 13     | 17     | 13      | 15    | 15      | 12     | 13      | 14     | 15      | 14     | 11     | 14     | 14      | 15     | 15    | 16     | 13     | 8      | 10     | 10     | 12    | 17   | 12    | 12     | 14    | 9     | 15 |
| EQUITY                                |  |                 |         |        |         |        |        |         |       |         |        |         |        |         |        |        |        |         |        |       |        |        |        |        |        |       |      |       |        |       |       |    |
| Operating funds specified             |  | 0 - 10          | 9       | 8      | 8       | 8      | 8      | 8       | 8     | 7       | 9      | 8       | 7      | 5       | 6      | 7      | 6      | 7       | 8      | 7     | 8      | 5      | 6      | 6      | 7      | 8     | 7    | 8     | 5      | 8     | 8     | 5  |
| Pre-K funds                           |  | 0 - 2           | 0       | 0      | 0       | 1      | 2      | 1       | 0     | 0       | 0      | 0       | 0      | 1       | 2      | 0      | 1      | 2       | 2      | 0     | 0      | 1      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 1     | 0    | 0     | 0.5    | 2     | 0     | 0  |
| Facility funds/financing              |  | 0 - 5           | 3       | 2      | 2       | 0      | 4      | 3       | 1     | 0       | 3      | 1       | 1      | 0       | 3      | 1      | 0      | 1       | 2      | 1     | 1      | 0      | 1      | 0      | 1      | 0     | 0    | 0     | 1      | 2     | 0     | 0  |
| Equity Subtotal                       |  | 0 - 17          | 12      | 10     | 10      | 9      | 14     | 12      | 9     | 7       | 12     | 9       | 8      | 6       | 11     | 8      | 7      | 10      | 12     | 8     | 9      | 6      | 7      | 6      | 8      | 9     | 7    | 8     | 6.5    | 12    | 8     | 5  |
| TOTAL SCORE                           |  | 0 - 67          | 56      | 55     | 52      | 47     | 47     | 46      | 45    | 45      | 44     | 44      | 43     | 43      | 43     | 43     | 42     | 42      | 41     | 41    | 40     | 38     | 38     | 37     | 37     | 37    | 37   | 37    | 36.5   | 36    | 35    | 34 |
| Letter Grade                          |  | A-              | A-      | A-     | B+      | B+     | B+     | B       | B     | B-      | B-     | B-      | B-     | B-      | B-     | B-     | B-     | B-      | B-     | B-    | C+     | C+     | C+     | C+     | C+     | C+    | C+   | C     | C      | C     | C     |    |
| Score/Percentage                      |  | 92%             | 92%     | 92%    | 88%     | 88%    | 88%    | 85%     | 85%   | 82%     | 82%    | 82%     | 82%    | 82%     | 82%    | 82%    | 82%    | 82%     | 82%    | 82%   | 78%    | 78%    | 78%    | 78%    | 78%    | 78%   | 78%  | 75%   | 75%    | 75%   | 75%   |    |
| Rank                                  |  | 1               | 2       | 3      | 4       | 5 ↗    | 6 ↘    | 7 ↗     | 8 ↗   | 9 ↗     | 10 ↗   | 11 ↘    | 12 ↗   | 13 ↘    | 14 ↘   | 15 ↘   | 16 ↘   | 17 ↘    | 18 ↗   | 19 ↘  | 20 ↘   | 21 ↗   | 22 ↗   | 23 ↗   | 24 ↘   | 25    | 26 ↘ | 27 ↗  | 28 ↘   | 29 ↘  | 30 ↘  |    |
| Rank (2025)                           |  | 1               | 2       | 3      | 4       | 6      | 5      | 9       | 11    | 18      | 14     | 10      | 13     | 8       | 7      | 12     | 15     | 16      | 21     | 17    | 19     | 29     | 23     | 24     | 22     | 25    | 20   | 31    | 27     | 26    | 28    |    |
| Number of Charter Schools             |  | 739             | 580     | 132    | 374     | 142    | 169    | 221     | 17    | 346     | 147    | 262     | 111    | 369     | 78     | 221    | 62     | 958     | 102    | 8     | 148    | 90     | 105    | 119    | 84     | 22    | 0    | 25    | 72     | 9     | 41    |    |
| Number of Charter Students            |  | 408,481         | 231,703 | 62,829 | 155,868 | 47,564 | 73,149 | 158,177 | 1,594 | 125,514 | 85,204 | 136,218 | 66,627 | 190,602 | 43,034 | 50,379 | 55,021 | 442,840 | 45,626 | 4,243 | 99,190 | 70,534 | 75,266 | 44,690 | 25,749 | 1,979 | 0    | 9,042 | 48,472 | 1,472 | 6,321 |    |

# NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL LAWS RANKING & SCORECARD — 2026



## KEY FINDINGS

Florida holds the nation’s top spot for a third consecutive year – but this year’s real story is movement. Iowa rocketed from #11 to the top ten, and Ohio jumped nine spots on stronger enforcement of laws already on the books.

Only three states earned an A or A-, and just 40% of states with charter laws scored a B- or better – proof that most states still have real work to do to give families access to great public charter schools

Since 1996, CER has studied charter schools and their impact, environment, and practice, and made recommendations for how to improve each state’s law. The score is based on whether the law allows for the freedom and flexibility that lets parents, teachers, and the public build vibrant, successful charter schools – without undue interference from flawed state regulators, and with equitable funding and parents in the driver’s seat.

| Grade                                 |  | C               |         |         |        |        |        |        |        | D     |       |       |        |       |        |        |        | F    |       |       |
|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|------|-------|-------|
| State                                 |  | PA              | CA      | OR      | NM     | NJ     | HI     | DE     | MS     | ME    | AK    | IL    | WA     | CT    | MD     | RI     | KY     | KS   | VA    |       |
| Year law passed                       |  | 1997            | 1992    | 1999    | 1993   | 1995   | 1994   | 1995   | 2010   | 2011  | 1995  | 1996  | 2012   | 1996  | 2003   | 1995   | 2017   | 1994 | 1998  |       |
| AUTHORIZATION                         |  | Possible Points |         |         |        |        |        |        |        |       |       |       |        |       |        |        |        |      |       |       |
| Multiple authorizers                  |  | 0 - 5           | 1       | 1       | 1      | 2      | 2      | 3      | 2      | 2     | 3     | 2     | 1      | 2     | 2      | 1      | 2      | 1    | 0     | 0     |
| Authorizer activity                   |  | 0 - 3           | 0       | 0       | 0      | 1      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0     | 1     | 0     | 0      | 1     | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0    | 0     | 0     |
| Independence of local/state authority |  | 0 - 7           | 2       | 2       | 2      | 4      | 1      | 2      | 3      | 5     | 1     | 2     | 2      | 1     | 1      | 0      | 1      | 1    | 0     | 0     |
| Authorization Subtotal                |  | 0 - 15          | 3       | 3       | 3      | 7      | 3      | 5      | 5      | 7     | 5     | 4     | 3      | 4     | 3      | 1      | 3      | 2    | 0     | 0     |
| GROWTH                                |  |                 |         |         |        |        |        |        |        |       |       |       |        |       |        |        |        |      |       |       |
| Charter cap                           |  | 0 - 10          | 9       | 9       | 8      | 5      | 10     | 10     | 6      | 3     | 1     | 10    | 0      | 3     | 3      | 10     | 3      | 10   | 10    | 10    |
| Scaling up                            |  | 0 - 5           | 1       | 2       | 1      | 1      | 1      | 1      | 1      | 0     | 1     | 2     | 0      | 0     | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0    | 0     | 0     |
| Growth Subtotal                       |  | 0 - 15          | 10      | 11      | 9      | 6      | 11     | 11     | 7      | 4     | 1     | 11    | 2      | 3     | 3      | 10     | 3      | 10   | 10    | 10    |
| OPERATIONS                            |  |                 |         |         |        |        |        |        |        |       |       |       |        |       |        |        |        |      |       |       |
| School autonomy                       |  | 0 - 8           | 5       | 5       | 5      | 4      | 3      | 4      | 5      | 4     | 6     | 2     | 5      | 5     | 4      | 1      | 3      | 2    | 4     | 2     |
| States allow freedom to innovate      |  | 0 - 7           | 5       | 2       | 4      | 3      | 3      | 4      | 4      | 4     | 3     | 2     | 2      | 3     | 3      | 2      | 3      | 3    | 3     | 2     |
| Teacher freedom                       |  | 0 - 5           | 3       | 3       | 3      | 3      | 3      | 0      | 3      | 3     | 3     | 0     | 3      | 3     | 3      | 0      | 2      | 4    | 2     | 1     |
| Operations Subtotal                   |  | 0 - 20          | 13      | 10      | 12     | 10     | 9      | 8      | 12     | 11    | 12    | 4     | 10     | 11    | 10     | 3      | 8      | 9    | 9     | 5     |
| EQUITY                                |  |                 |         |         |        |        |        |        |        |       |       |       |        |       |        |        |        |      |       |       |
| Operating funds specified             |  | 0 - 10          | 7       | 7       | 8      | 7      | 6      | 4      | 6      | 8     | 8     | 7     | 9      | 6     | 4      | 6      | 7      | 0    | 0     | 0     |
| Pre-K funds                           |  | 0 - 2           | 0       | 0       | 0      | 1      | 2      | 2      | 0      | 0     | 2     | 0     | 0      | 0     | 2      | 0      | 0      | 0    | 0     | 0     |
| Facility funds/financing              |  | 0 - 5           | 0       | 1       | 0      | 1      | 0.5    | 0      | 0      | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0      | 0     | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0    | 0     | 0     |
| Equity Subtotal                       |  | 0 - 17          | 7       | 8       | 8      | 9      | 8.5    | 6      | 6      | 8     | 10    | 7     | 9      | 6     | 6      | 6      | 7      | 0    | 0     | 0     |
| TOTAL SCORE                           |  | 0 - 67          | 33      | 32      | 32     | 32     | 31.5   | 20     | 20     | 20    | 20    | 20    | 20     | 20    | 20     | 20     | 20     | 20   | 20    | 20    |
| Letter Grade                          |  |                 | C-      | C-      | C-     | C-     | C-     | C-     | C-     | C-    | D+    | D     | D-     | D-    | D-     | D-     | D-     | D-   | F     | F     |
| Score/Percentage                      |  |                 | 72%     | 72%     | 72%    | 72%    | 72%    | 72%    | 72%    | 72%   | 68%   | 65%   | 62%    | 62%   | 62%    | 62%    | 62%    | 62%  | 50%   | 50%   |
| Rank                                  |  |                 | 31 ↘    | 32      | 33 ↗   | 34 ↘   | 35 ↘   | 36 ↘   | 37 ↗   | 38 ↘  | 39 ↗  | 40    | 41 ↗   | 42 ↗  | 43 ↗   | 44 ↗   | 45 ↗   | 46 ↘ | 47 ↘  | 48 ↘  |
| Rank (2025)                           |  |                 | 30      | 32      | 37     | 33     | 34     | 35     | 39     | 36    | 45    | 40    | 42     | 48    | 44     | 47     | 46     | 38   | 41    | 43    |
| Number of Charter Schools             |  |                 | 222     | 1,262   | 130    | 110    | 84     | 40     | 24     | 10    | 9     | 32    | 128    | 16    | 30     | 50     | 40     | 0    | 9     | 7     |
| Number of Charter Students            |  |                 | 174,017 | 725,646 | 47,283 | 30,264 | 63,535 | 13,371 | 19,050 | 4,232 | 2,846 | 7,349 | 64,710 | 4,817 | 10,869 | 24,904 | 13,851 | 0    | 2,382 | 1,273 |