

## Charter School Policies - State Profile

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Maintenance of this database is a collective effort between ECS and the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Please contact Molly Ryan, 303.299.3614 or [mryan@ecs.org](mailto:mryan@ecs.org) with questions or comments about the database.

### South Carolina

#### Charter School Basics

Does the state have a charter school law?	Yes
Does the state allow existing public schools to convert to charter schools?	Yes
Does the state allow for the creation of start-up charter schools?	Yes
Is a charter school part of a local education agency (LEA) or its own LEA?	A charter school organizes as non-profit organization, but is part of an LEA.
Does the state specify the charter schools or the students that may be given preference?	<p>Yes. A charter school may give enrollment priority to a sibling of a pupil already enrolled or previously enrolled, children of a charter school employee and children of the charter committee, provided their enrollment does not constitute more than 20% of the enrollment of the charter school. A charter school must give priority to in-district children versus out-of-district children, and the out-of-district enrollment must not exceed 20% of the total enrollment of the charter school without the approval of the sponsoring local school board and the sending local school board. A converted charter school must give priority in enrollment to students enrolled in the school at the time of conversion.</p> <p>The state law requires that the racial composition of a charter school's enrollment reflect that of the school district or of the targeted student population which the charter school proposes to serve, differing by no more than 20% from that population. A charter school</p>

	may not conflict with any school district desegregation plan or order in effect.
Does the state have any caps on the number of charter schools?	No
Who can approve charter schools?	An applicant must first submit an application to the state-level charter school advisory committee, which determines whether the application is compliant. If so, the application is forwarded to the local school board, which then determines whether or not to approve the application.
Does the state specify who may apply to open a charter school?	Yes. Parents, teachers and community members may apply to open a charter school.
Is there an appeals process in place for charter applicants?	Yes. A charter application denied by the state-level charter school advisory committee or a local school board may be appealed to the Administrative Law Court.
Does the state provide technical assistance to charter schools?	Yes. Local school boards and the state department of education provide technical assistance to charter school applicants upon request.
<b>Charter School Finance</b>	
Through whom does a charter school receive its funding?	The school district
How is the funding for a charter school determined?	A school district distributes state, county and school district funds to a charter school as determined by a formula outlined in state law.
Does the state provide start-up and/or planning grants to charter schools?	No
Does the state provide facilities funds or other facilities assistance to charter schools?	Yes. The state department of education must make available, upon request, a list of vacant and unused buildings and vacant and unused portions of buildings that are owned by school districts and that may be suitable for the operation of a charter school. If a school district declares a building surplus and chooses to sell or lease the building, a charter school's board of directors or a charter committee operating or applying within the school district must be given the first refusal to purchase or lease the building under the same or superior terms and conditions as it would be offered to the public.

Does the state specify who must provide transportation to charter school students?	Yes. In its application, a charter school must describe how it plans to meet the transportation needs of its pupils. If the lack of transportation prevents a child from attending a charter school, the charter school must provide or facilitate transportation for that student; although a charter school is not required to provide or facilitate transportation for out-of-district students.
<b>Charter School Autonomy</b>	
Are the state's standards and assessments applied to charter schools?	Yes
What rules are waived for charter schools?	Except as provided in the state's charter school law, a charter school is exempt from all provisions of law and regulations applicable to a public school, a school board, or a district, although a charter school may elect to comply with one or more of these provisions of law or regulations.
<b>Charter School Teachers</b>	
Do teachers in a charter school have to be certified?	Up to 10% of teachers in conversion schools and 25% in start-up schools may be non-certified. In either a new or converted charter school, a teacher teaching in the core academic areas of English/language arts, mathematics, science or social studies must be certified in those areas or possess a baccalaureate or graduate degree in the subject he or she is hired to teach.
What sets teacher salaries?	The charter school
Does the state require school districts to grant teachers a leave of absence to teach in a charter school?	Yes. Up to 5 years
Do teachers in each of a state's charter schools have equal access to the public school teachers' retirement system?	Yes
Are charter schools bound by school district collective bargaining agreements?	A conversion charter school's teachers remain covered by the school district employment policy. A start-up charter school's teachers may remain covered by the school district employment policy, negotiate as separate unit with charter school governing body or work independently.

Charter School Accountability	
Does the state require charter schools to submit annual reports?	Yes. Charter schools must prepare an annual report. Charter schools receive a performance rating and must issue a report card containing the rating and explaining its significance and providing other information. Charter schools must also submit financial reports.
Does the state list grounds for terminating a school's charter?	Yes. (1) Committed a material violation of the conditions, standards or procedures provided for in the charter application; (2) Failed to meet or make reasonable progress toward pupil achievement standards identified in the charter application; (3) Failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management; or (4) Violated any provision of law from which the charter school was not specifically exempted.
Does the state provide an appeals process in the charter school renewal process?	Yes. A decision not to renew a charter may be appealed to the Administrative Law Court.
Does the state require the state education agency or another entity to report on the effectiveness of charter schools?	No

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