

Charter School AUTHORIZING

California State Superintendent of
Public Instruction Charter School
Action Team

Public Webinar

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Charter School Authorizing



1. Background & Basics
2. State Examples
3. Best Practices for Quality Authorizing

Background & Basics

WHAT ARE CHARTER SCHOOLS?



Public schools, public funding.

Operated by an independent governing board under a contract (charter).

Contract between the school's board the and the authorizer.

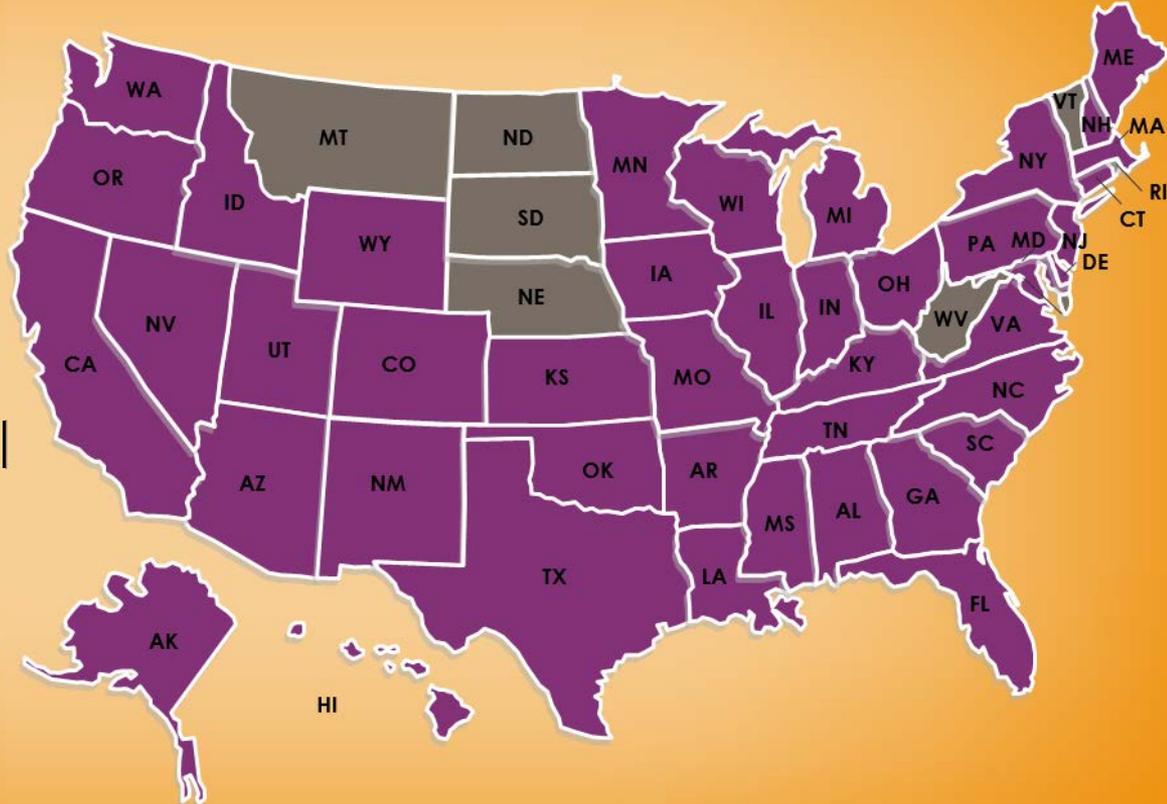
Greater autonomy, greater accountability.

Background & Basics

States with charter school laws:

44 + D.C.

Kentucky has the newest charter school laws (2017)



Background & Basics



Background & Basics

MAIN DUTIES OF AUTHORIZERS



- Oversight
- Monitoring
- Support
- Approval
- Renewals
- Intervention

Background & Basics

OTHER AUTHORIZER INFORMATION



- Appeals
- Funding
 - ◆ Authorizer fees: 3-5%
 - ◆ State/district funded

Background & Basics

AUTHORIZER TYPES



- **Most Common**
 - Local School Boards
 - State Boards
 - Independent Organizations
- **Other Types**

Background & Basics

STATE BREAKDOWN BY AUTHORIZER TYPES



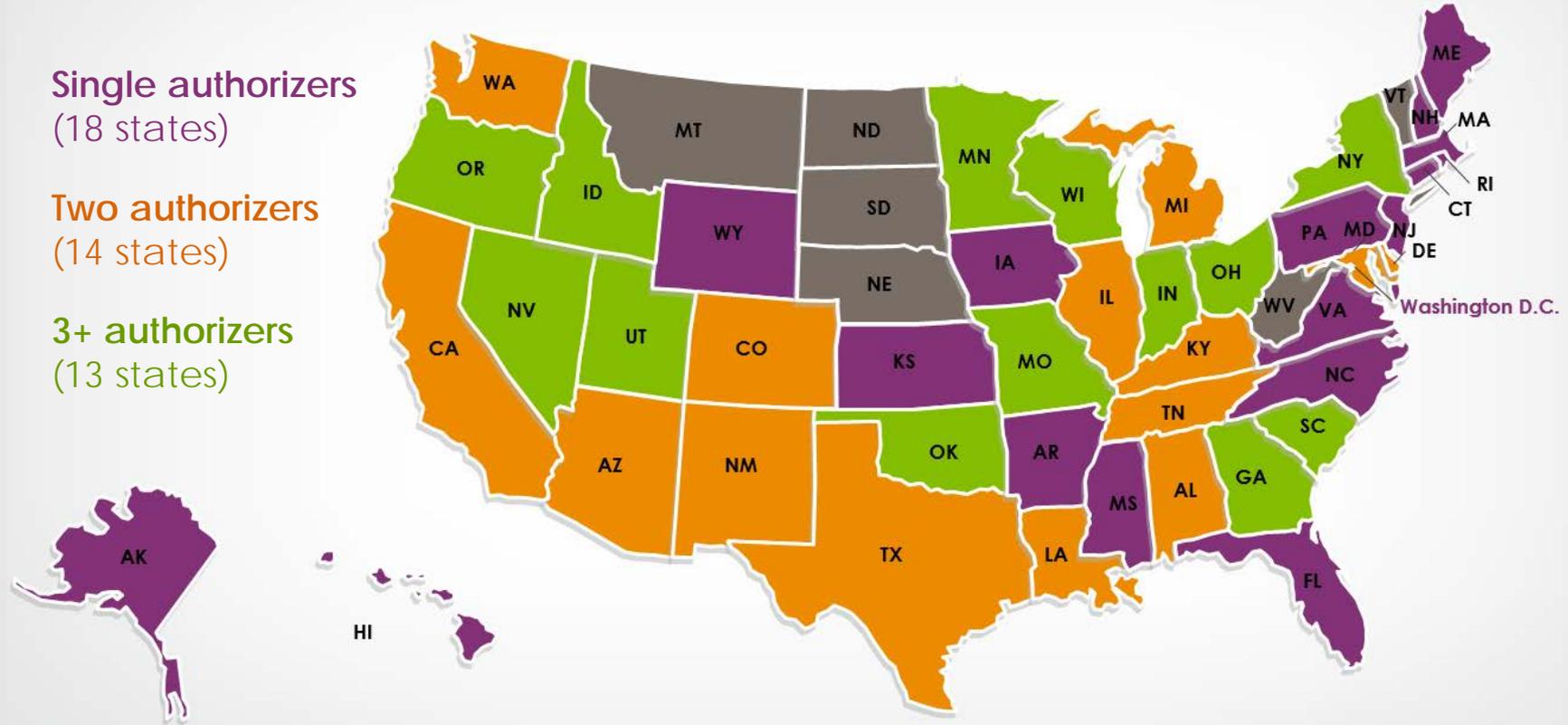
- Single authorizers
- Two authorizers
- Three or more authorizers

Background & Basics

Single authorizers
(18 states)

Two authorizers
(14 states)

3+ authorizers
(13 states)



Background & Basics



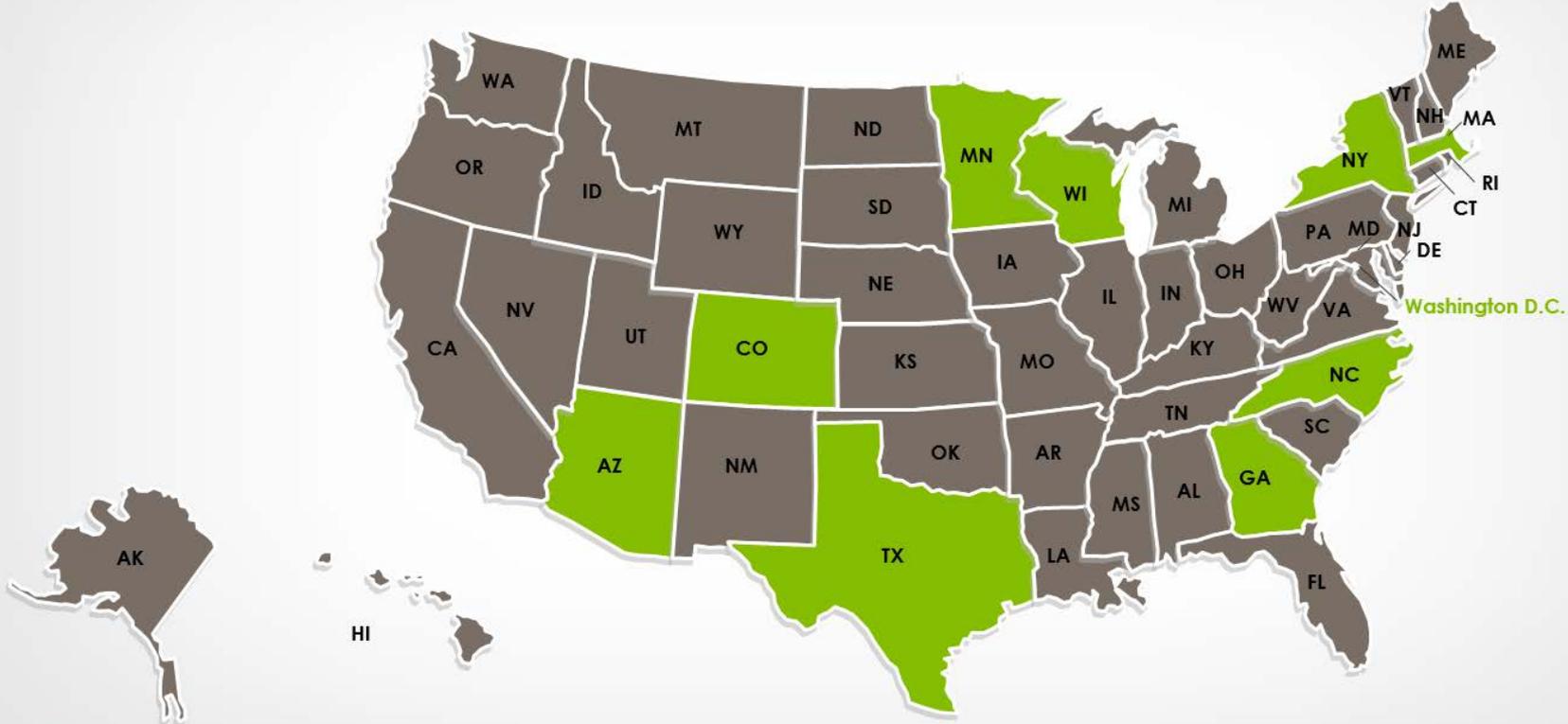
- **Statewide focus**
- **District focus**
- **Combination**

Charter School Authorizing



1. Background & Basics
- 2. State Examples**
3. Best Practices for Quality Authorizing

State Examples



State Examples



Arizona: Chartering agency, higher education (LEAs)



Colorado: LEAs, chartering agency



DC: Chartering agency



Georgia: Chartering agency, LEAs, SEA



Massachusetts: SEA

State Examples



Minnesota: Nonprofits, higher education, LEAs



New York: SEA, higher education, NYCDE, LEAs



North Carolina: SEA, local government, nonprofits



Texas: SEA, LEAs



Wisconsin: LEA, higher education, local governments, tribes

State Examples



ARIZONA



Authorizers: Arizona State Board for Charter Schools (ASBCS; independent chartering organization), higher education institutions

State Examples



ARIZONA



- 550+ charter schools, 185,000+ students (2017-18)
- Most authorized by ASBCS
- New charter, 15 years; Renewal, 20 years
- New charter appeals: Limited options

State Examples



COLORADO



Authorizers: Local education agencies,
Colorado Charter School Institute (CCSI,
independent charter agency)

State Examples



COLORADO



- 250 charter schools, 120,700 students (2017-18)
- 39 by authorized by CCSI; 211 by districts with "exclusive chartering authority"
- New charter: 4 years
- Renewal: LEAs, undefined; CCSI, 5 years
- New charter appeals: CCSI or State Board

State Examples



COLORADO



LEAs

- 'Exclusive chartering authority' (ECA) required from the state.
- Districts vary widely in schools authorized and authorizing practices.

CCSI

- Authorizes schools on appeal and in districts without ECA or that give up ECA.

State Examples



MASSACHUSETTS



Authorizer: State Board of Education/
Department of Education

State Examples



MASSACHUSETTS



- 82 charter schools (2018-19), 42,000 students (2017-18)
- Two charter options, most not associated with a school district
- New charter & renewal: 5 years
- New charter appeals: None

Charter School Authorizing



1. Background & Basics
2. State Examples
- 3. Best Practices for Quality Authorizing**

Quality Authorizing

- **What makes a great charter school?**
 - Quality
 - Equity
 - Accountability
 - Transparency

<http://www.nea.org/home/60828.htm>

Quality Authorizing

- **Authorizer Accountability**
 - Authorizer standards
 - Authorizer reporting and evaluation
 - New authorizer application
 - Sanctions

Quality Authorizing



Georgia



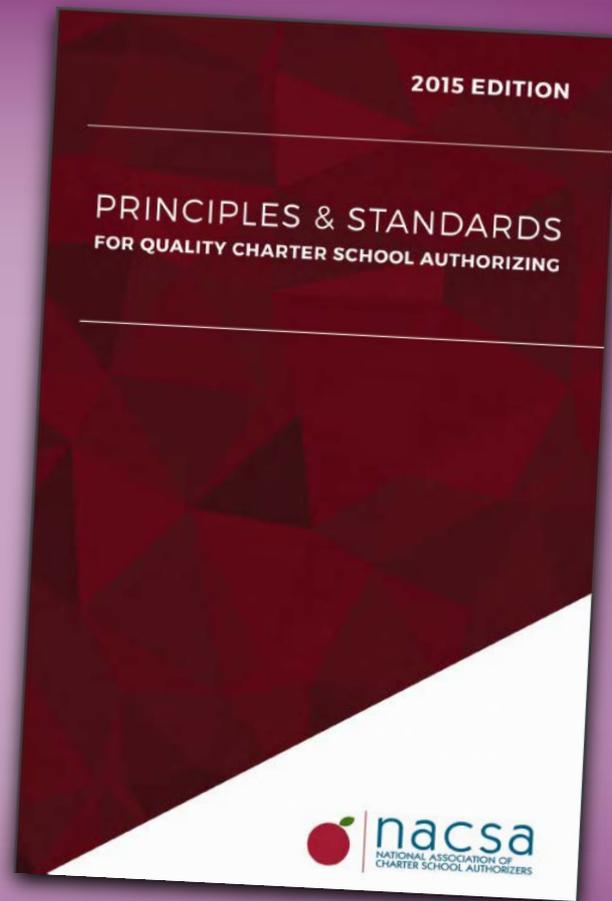
Ga. Code Ann. § 20-2-2063.3

(a) **The State Board of Education and the State Charter Schools Commission shall jointly establish a code of principles and standards of charter school authorizing to guide local boards of education, the state board, and the State Charter Schools Commission in meeting high-quality authorizing practices.** The principles and standards established by the state board and the State Charter Schools Commission shall include:

- (1) Maintaining high standards for approving charter petitions;
- (2) Establishing high academic, financial, and operational performance standards for charter schools;
- (3) Annually monitoring, evaluating, and reporting charter school progress in meeting academic, financial, and operational performance standards;
- (4) Upholding charter school autonomy in school governance, instructional program implementation, personnel, and budgeting;
- (5) Protecting students and holding charter schools accountable for their obligations to all students; and
- (6) Protecting the public interest and holding charter schools accountable for their obligations of governance, management, and oversight of public funds.

Quality Authorizing

Principles & Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing (NACSA)



<https://www.qualitycharters.org/for-authorizers/principles-and-standards/>

Quality Authorizing

12 ESSENTIAL PRACTICES

1. **MISSION** - Have a published and available mission for quality authorizing.
2. **STAFF** - Have staff assigned to authorizing within the organization or by contract.
3. **CONTRACTS** - Sign a contract with each school.
4. **APPLICATION CRITERIA** - Have established, documented criteria for the evaluation of charter applications.
5. **APPLICATION TIMELINE** - Publish application timelines and materials.
6. **APPLICATION INTERVIEW** - Interview all qualified charter applicants.
7. **EXTERNAL EXPERT PANEL** - Use expert panels that include external members to review charter applications.
8. **5-YEAR TERM LENGTH** - Grant initial charter terms of five years only.
9. **FINANCIAL AUDIT** - Require and/or examine annual, independent financial audits of its charter schools.
10. **RENEWAL CRITERIA** - Have established renewal criteria.
11. **REVOCATION CRITERIA** - Have established revocation criteria.
12. **ANNUAL REPORT** - Provide an annual report to each school on its performance.

<https://www.qualitycharters.org/for-authorizers/12-essential-practices/>

Quality Authorizing

National Alliance for Public Charter Schools – Charter School Model Law

3. **Non-District Authorizers Available**
4. **Authorizer and Overall Program Accountability System Required**
5. **Adequate Authorizer Funding**

<https://www.publiccharters.org/our-work/charter-law-database/components>

<https://www.publiccharters.org/publications/model-law-supporting-high-quality-charter-public-schools>

Quality Authorizing

National Alliance for Public Charter Schools – Charter School Model Law

IS AN AUTHORIZER AND OVERALL PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM REQUIRED?

SUBCOMPONENTS

- Registration process for school boards to affirm their interest in authorizing.
- Application process for other eligible authorizing entities (except a state charter schools commission).
- Authorizer submission of annual report.
- The ability for the state to conduct a review of an authorizer's performance.
- The ability for the state to sanction an authorizer for poor performance, including suspending an authorizer's authority to approve new schools.
- Periodic formal evaluation of overall state charter school program and outcomes.

<https://www.publiccharters.org/our-work/charter-law-database/components/4>

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