Charter School
AUTHORIZING

California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Charter School Action Team

Public Webinar

Micah Ann Wixom

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www.ecs.org | @EdCommission
Who we are

The **essential, indispensable** member of any team addressing education policy.
What we do

We believe in the power of learning from experience and we know informed policymakers create better education policy.
How we do it

RESEARCH

REPORT

COUNSEL

CONVENE
1. Background & Basics

2. State Examples

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
AUTHORIZER TYPES

- Most Common
  - Local School Boards
  - State Boards
  - Independent Organizations

- Other Types
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
1. Background & Basics
2. State Examples
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, NYC DE, LEAs

**North Carolina**: SEA, local government, nonprofits

**Texas**: SEA, LEAs

**Wisconsin**: LEA, higher education, local governments, tribes
State Examples

**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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEAs</th>
<th>CCSI</th>
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<td>• ‘Exclusive chartering authority’ (ECA) required from the state.</td>
<td>• Authorizes schools on appeal and in districts without ECA or that give up ECA.</td>
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<td>• Districts vary widely in schools authorized and authorizing practices.</td>
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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
1. Background & Basics
2. State Examples
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

(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
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
1. Background & Basics
2. State Examples
Contact

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