



PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

Across the country, school choice options are provided to students and families in a number of different ways. The laws and regulations governing school choice programs can vary dramatically from state to state. For more information, click on the QR code below, or go to [hoover.org/schoolchoicemap](https://www.hoover.org/schoolchoicemap).

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS DEFINED

Public charter schools are schools that have discretion to open and operate with considerable freedom from the laws, regulations, and policies that district-run public schools typically face. Their status is time limited and supervised by a designated organization; school districts, colleges, nonprofit organizations, and other organizations can assume the oversight role. These schools are allowed to determine many of their own policies and practices; the goal is to innovate within the public school system. Charter schools are public schools, and they are not allowed to charge tuition or selectively enroll students. The first law enabling charter schools was passed in 1991.

KEY VARIABLES

Each state has its own teacher certification or licensure policies for charter schools; in some states all or most teachers in public charter schools must be certified or licensed by each state to teach, and many allow for alternate pathways to certification.

In many places, there are more families who want to attend charter schools than there are seats available, due to limits on charter school enrollment. When this happens, schools use lotteries to select which students to enroll from their waitlist.

The “charter” in charter school refers to the governing agreement between the school and its authorizing entity, which describes the purpose and goals of the school and the ways it will meet the needs of its students.

POLICY IN PRACTICE: STATE HIGHLIGHT



Idaho

Idaho passed public charter school legislation in 1998. Today, Idaho has more than fifty brick-and-mortar charter schools, as well as several virtual charter schools that parents can choose from. There is no cap on charter school growth in the state, and authorizers of charter schools include local school boards, the state charter school commission, a state public college or university, or an accredited, nonprofit private college or university. More than twenty thousand students are currently enrolled in Idaho’s charter schools.

For more information click here:

