



Charter Schools Overview

House Fraud Prevention and State Agency Oversight Policy Committee

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What Is A Charter School

- Currently, there are 173 charter schools in operation in Minnesota, serving approximately 70,000 prekindergarten through grade 12 students.
- Charter schools are independent public schools that parents and students choose to attend, are open to all students and do not charge tuition.
- The primary purpose of mission-driven charter schools in Minnesota is to improve the learning, achievement, and success of all students.
- They employ licensed teachers and offer programming for students requiring special education services. Charter school students are required to take state assessments.
- A charter school is exempt from all statutes and rules applicable to a school district unless a statute or rule is made specifically applicable to a charter school, or is included Minnesota Statutes Chapter 124E.
- To serve students in Minnesota, a charter school must have an authorizer.

What Is An Authorizer

- Ensure that its authorized charter school has the autonomy granted by statute, fulfills the purposes of a charter school, and is accountable to its contract.
- Authorizers can be school boards or intermediate school district school boards, other education districts, charitable organizations, institutions of higher education, nonprofit corporations subject to Chapter 317A, or single purpose authorizers.
- An authorizer is responsible for:
 - Establishing the initial performance contract with a charter school;
 - Determining if a charter school is ready to open;
 - Providing oversight of charter schools in the areas of academic, operational, and financial performance;
 - Evaluating the academic, operational, and financial performance of charter schools in its portfolio;
 - Reviewing proposed changes to charter schools in its portfolio, such as site and grade expansions (including early learning programs), site changes (if applicable), and more; and
 - Determining the renewal, nonrenewal, or termination of the contract.

MDE's Role in the Charter Sector

- General oversight of public education programs that charter schools administer
- Approval, oversight, and review of authorizers