



ALASKA
POLICY FORUM

Alaska's Education Landscape

House Ways & Means and Education Committees Joint Hearing
March 15, 2023, 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM AKST

Presenters:

Bob Griffin, Senior Education Research Fellow
Sarah Montalbano, Education Policy Analyst

Alaska Policy Forum

Alaska Charter School Laws

MEASURING UP TO THE MODEL

TABLE 1: 2022 STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL LAW RANKINGS

RANKING	STATE	SCORE
1	Indiana	181
2	Colorado	181
3	▲2 Alabama	180 ▲3
4	Minnesota	178
5	▲2 Florida	175 ▲6
6	▲3 Washington	173 ▲6
7	▲1 Mississippi	169
8	Louisiana	168
9	▲3 Nevada	168 ▲2
10	▲1 Maine	167
11	▲1 D.C.	166
12	▲12 Ohio	165 ▲12
13	▲1 Massachusetts	162
14	▲1 Arizona	160
15	▲1 North Carolina	160
16	▲1 Delaware	160
17	▲1 Georgia	158
18	▲23 Iowa	157 ▲68
19	▲3 Oklahoma	157 ▲4
20	▲3 New Hampshire	157 ▲4
21	▲4 Idaho	157
22	▲4 New York	156
23	▲4 South Carolina	155
24	▲4 California	154
25	▲4 Utah	154
26	▲1 Tennessee	153
27	Missouri	153 ▲6
28	▲4 West Virginia	152 ▲18
29	▲3 New Mexico	152
30	▲2 Michigan	149 ▲2
31	▲1 Hawaii	147 ▲4
32	▲3 Texas	145
33	▲2 Arkansas	141
34	▲8 Wyoming	136 ▲49
35	▲1 New Jersey	135 ▲4
36	▲3 Oregon	131
37	▲2 Pennsylvania	131
38	Illinois	127 ▲3
39	▲3 Connecticut	126
40	▲3 Rhode Island	126
41	▲2 Wisconsin	109
42	▲2 Virginia	94
43	Alaska	83
44	Kansas	69
45	Maryland	61

NOTE: THE TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE IS 240.

Alaska's charter school laws are 3rd most restrictive nationwide

- Lack multiple authorizers
- Equitable funding
- Facilities and transportation funding
- Lack of independence
- Charter management organizations not allowed

Recommendation: Correspondence Students

- Correspondence students are **16.5% of K-12 students but 5.3% of K-12 expenditures**
- Correspondence students should also get weights for special education (1.2), and CTE education (0.015) for a total of 1.215 AADM.
 - Hundreds of CSAP students have special needs or participate in CTE
- Correspondence students with intensive needs should receive weights to their allotment like intensive needs students in traditional district schools
 - Allotment multiplier of 10 (for example) would allow parents to choose between providers while the state would realize cost-savings of 3 BSAs per intensive needs student using the allotment instead of traditional public school
 - Decreases incentive for districts to over-classify intensive need students
 - Increases incentive for districts to be attentive to intensive need parents
- Florida's **Family Empowerment Scholarship Program** lets parents choose private-sector options (or a public school outside of their zoned area) that better suits their child's needs with up to 90% of state Special Ed funding

Alaskan Students Benefit From Choice

- 2017-2019 PEAKS assessments
- Students in Alaska's charter schools performed better than students enrolled in Alaska's traditional public schools *regardless of ethnicity, gender, or subgroup*
 - Charter students from all ethnicities reported higher average scale scores every year in both subjects
 - Male and female charter students reported higher average scores and percentage of students proficient every year in both subjects
 - Charter students with disabilities, English language learners, and *economically disadvantaged students (low-income)* all had higher percentages of students testing proficient every year in both subjects
- Alaska scored the highest nationally for value-added learning gains in [EFI Charter School Ecosystem Rankings](#)

Source: Alaska Policy Forum [analysis from public records](#) request.

HB 165

There are 105,526 students enrolled in neighborhood public schools in Alaska, and 21,927 enrolled in correspondence study programs.

Correspondence study students are **16.5% of all students but account for less than 5.3% of total funding.**

HB 165



Current CSAP (Correspondence School Allotment Programs) Funding Formula:

BSA (\$5,960) x .9 = \$5,364 => Allocation to Parents as low as \$2,500

The remainder of the CSAP Formula => School Districts

HB 165

HB 165 Proposed CASP Funding Formula:

BSA (\$5,960) x 1.5 = \$8,940 => Allocation of \$8,940

HB 165 also proposes an Intensive Needs Multiplier of 11 x for Intensive Needs Children

The remainder of the Public Education Funding Formula (\$18,852-\$8,940) = \$9912 => State savings

HB 165



With a larger allocation in the hands of parents to direct their own child's education, we could see a significant increase in correspondence school participation than the 21,000 Correspondence Study (CSAP) students we have with just a \$2,500 incentive.

HB 165



An increase in the CSAP funding formula to $1.5 \times \text{BSA}$ (HB 165) has a fiscal note of \$72.7 million for 21,000 students. Savings per student switching would be reduced to \$9,912.

It would take 7,335 students to switch to break even. If 10,500 students switched, **we would save \$31.3 million per year.**

HB 165

Alaska Charter Schools

Depending on where you live in Alaska, public charter schools may be another public school option available to you. Like traditional public schools, charter schools are public, free, and usually have no requirements for entry. What distinguishes charter schools is that they have extra freedom to innovate with learning methods and are accountable to authorizing entities for results.

HB 165

Alaska passed charter school legislation in 1995 and currently has 31 charter schools that serve more than 7,000 students. Each school has a charter which explains the school's purpose and what specific community need it serves. For example, that might be providing a Spanish immersion program or offering a rigorous, literacy-based curriculum. If there are more families seeking admittance to a charter school than there are seats, a good old-fashioned lottery system is typically used to determine admittance.

HB 165

For the 2023 school year, there are 31 charter public schools serving 8,191 students in Alaska.

Alaska charter public schools have an [average math proficiency](#) score of 48% (versus the Alaska public school average of 33%), and [reading proficiency](#) score of 59% (versus the 40% statewide average).

HB 165



Minority enrollment in Alaska Charter Schools is 35% of the student body, which is less than the Alaska public school 53% average minority enrollment.

HB 165

Why are multiple authorizers important?

Permitting the creation of independent authorizers is one of the most important components of a strong charter law. The data show that states with multiple chartering authorities have almost three and a half times more charter schools than states that only allow local school board approval. About 78 percent of the nation's charter schools are in states with multiple authorizers or a strong appeals process. These states are also home to the highest quality charter schools, as evidenced by state test scores, numerous credible research studies and ongoing observation.

States that do not have multiple authorizers create hostile environments for charters because school boards often view charter schools as competition and reject applications not based on merit, but on politics. Without objective oversight from multiple authorizers, charter schools have no alternatives for approval, and quality growth in a state is severely stunted. School board hostility has prevented certain states, such as Maryland, Tennessee, and Rhode Island from meeting growing demand for school choice.

HB 165

THE ALTERNATIVE AUTHORIZER LANDSCAPE

Forty states and the District of Columbia now have charter schools. Of these, 14 have one or more types of alternative charter authorizers. The other 27 use a combination of local, regional, and state board authorizers.(7)

Separate state-level charter boards. As of January 2007, six states and the District of Columbia had created separate state-level chartering boards: the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools (1994), the Colorado Charter School Institute (2004), the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board (1996), the Florida Schools of Excellence Commission (2006), the Idaho Public Charter School Commission (2004), the South Carolina Public Charter School District (2006), and the Utah State Charter Board (2004).

Generally, the members of such state-level commissions or boards are appointed by one or more public officials, such as the governor or legislative leaders. In some states, those appointed must represent certain constituencies (e.g., the business community or charter school operators) or possess particular expertise (e.g., public finance or curriculum). In all cases, their sole purpose is to review, approve, and oversee charter schools within their state. And in most states that have such entities, they tend to charter the vast majority of schools (e.g., 90% in Arizona and 75% in Utah).

HB 165



Questions?