

House Bill 93 Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of House Bill 93 (HB93)?

The bill would allow for additional ways for parents and communities to propose a new public charter school, will take away the politics from the application process and will also give public charter schools more autonomy while keeping checks and balances.

Why is there a need to change the current process?

Fear that public charter schools drain neighborhood schools of resources, has fueled special interests from supporting more charter schools. Currently, local school districts can approve or reject a charter school application. Because of this, it is possible for a charter school application to be rejected for reasons others that merit. There is no appeal process and no other avenue for parents to take their battle.

HB93 takes the politics away from the charter approval process.

What is an authorizer?

In simple terms, an entity that can approve or reject a proposal for a new public charter school. This entity will also monitor, renew and/or terminate a public charter school contract.

Under HB93, what qualifies as an authorizer?

In addition to local school districts, an authorizer could be a government agency, an Alaskan accredited postsecondary institution (a local community college or the University), or a nonprofit entity that has expertise in education, finance, or administration, or a combination of those three. The Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) will determine who can be an authorizer and whether or not they are able to accomplish the duties required under the law.

Will HB93 Take Away Local Control?

Public charter schools are already semi-autonomous and their advisory boards consist of parents of children attending the school, teachers and other employees. If anything, it's even **more localized!**

HB93 allows for more entities to become authorizers, but it does not change how charter schools operate or how they are funded. Current laws grant public charter schools control over their own curriculum, textbooks, budget and scheduling requirements. Other local policies and state laws have to be followed unless there's an exemption by the local school district given to that charter school.

It is important to note that the final decision to approve or reject a public charter school rests with the **State Board of Education. HB93 doesn't change that.**

Will public charter schools become unaccountable?

Absolutely not! The role of authorizers is also to monitor the progress made by the public charter school and take action if necessary. The authorizer can terminate a charter if that is in the best interest of the students. One common thread is that public charter schools that fail close. Public neighborhood schools that fail continue to get funded.

What happens if a public charter school fails to educate kids?

If a charter school fails to educate kids, **the charter may be revoked** and the school will close. Unlike traditional neighborhood schools, when a public charter school fails, it usually closes. When a neighborhood school fails, it usually gets more funding.

When parents make a choice to take their child to a charter or alternative school, they take a risk. However, the success rate of most public charter schools in Alaska has shown that they are doing really well.

Under HB93, will public charter schools get additional funds than other public schools?

No. The amount generated by students enrolled in public charter schools will remain unchanged. It's only the process of how those funds may reach the school that may change.

Will charter schools under HB93 discriminate against certain type of students?

No, as a public school, it's open to all students. However, because of size or limitations, current laws establish that a lottery process may be used to determine attendance. HB93 does not change how students are admitted in public charter schools.