



Charter Schools

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Charter Schools

The movement for charter schools emerged in the late 1980s as a strategy for education reform. Minnesota initiated the first charter school law in 1991 and California followed suit in 1992. In 1993, Wisconsin was one of six states to pass charter school legislation, enacted as part of the 1993-95 state budget (1993 Act 16). As of 2018, 44 states and the District of Columbia had enacted some type of charter school legislation.

While the specific provisions of charter school legislation vary widely among the states that have enacted it, certain characteristics are generally associated with charter schools. Charter schools are usually exempt from most laws and rules governing traditional public schools. In some cases, charter schools may also be exempt from a sponsoring school district's policies. However, it is generally required that charter schools be free of tuition, be nonsectarian, have nonselective admission policies, and abide by the same health, safety, and nondiscrimination laws that apply to non-charter schools. A public authority or sponsor, such as a local or state educational agency, usually has oversight or approval responsibilities, but a charter school may be operated by a separate entity such as a corporation or a group of teachers or parents. The school may be legally or fiscally autonomous, or it may remain a part of the school district. The schools are operated under a limited-term contract, or charter, which the sponsoring agency can revoke or not renew upon expiration.

This paper provides a description of charter school law and charter school funding as it applies to charter schools authorized by local school boards, including virtual charter schools, and by independent charter school authorizers. The appendix to this paper lists the charter schools that operated in the state in the 2017-18 school year.

Charter School Law

Establishment of School District Charters.

An unlimited number of charter schools may be established by school districts in the state. There are two methods under which local school boards may authorize charter schools.

First, a school board may, on its own initiative, contract to operate a school as a charter school. Under this process, a board may convert all of the district's schools to charter schools as long as the board provides alternative public school attendance arrangements for pupils who do not wish to attend or are not admitted to a charter school. At least 30 days before entering into a contract that would convert a private school to a charter school or that would establish a charter school that is not an instrumentality of the school district, the board must hold a public hearing on the contract. At the hearing, the board must consider employee and parental support for the charter school and the fiscal impact of the charter school on the district.

Second, a school board may authorize the establishment of a charter school upon receipt and approval of a written petition requesting the board to do so. The petition must be signed by at least 10% of the teachers employed by the district or by at least 50% of the teachers employed at one school in the district.

The petition must include the following 15 provisions:

1. The name of the person who is seeking to establish the charter school.
2. The name of the person who will be in

charge of the charter school and the manner in which administrative services will be provided.

3. A description of the educational program of the school.

4. The methods the school will use to enable pupils to attain the state's statutory educational goals and expectations related to academic skills and knowledge, vocational skills, citizenship, and personal development.

5. The method by which pupil progress in attaining the state's educational goals and expectations will be measured.

6. The governance structure of the school, including the method to be followed by the school to ensure parental involvement.

7. The qualifications that must be met by the individuals to be employed in the school.

8. The procedures that the school will follow to ensure the health and safety of the pupils.

9. The means by which the school will achieve a racial and ethnic balance among its pupils that is reflective of the school district population.

10. The requirements for admission to the school.

11. The manner in which annual audits of the financial and programmatic operations of the school will be performed.

12. The procedures for disciplining pupils.

13. The public school alternatives for pupils who reside in the school district and do not wish to attend or are not admitted to the charter school.

14. A description of the school facilities and the types and limits of the liability insurance that the school will carry.

15. The effect of the establishment of the charter school on the liability of the school district.

The board must hold a public hearing within 30 days of receiving the petition. At the hearing, the board must consider the level of employee and parental support for the school and the fiscal impact of the charter school on the district. After the hearing, the board may grant the petition.

A school board may grant a petition to convert all of the district's schools to charter schools if the petition is signed by at least 50% of the district's teachers and the school board provides alternative public school attendance arrangements for pupils who do not wish to attend or are not admitted to a charter school.

The Board of Directors of the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) is required to grant or deny a charter school petition within 30 days after a public hearing. If the MPS Board denies the petition, the person seeking to establish the charter school may, within 30 days after the denial, appeal the decision to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The Department must issue a decision within 30 days after receiving the appeal. This decision is final and not subject to judicial review.

Establishment of Independent Charter Schools. Statutes also allow certain entities to contract to operate a charter school. Table 1 shows the entities that are allowed to authorize independent charter schools and the budget act in which the entity was granted that authority. As described in a subsequent section, the method by which a particular independent charter school is funded depends in part on the authorizing entity.

Under 2015 Act 55, independent charter school authorizers are required to contract to operate a charter school, rather than operating the school directly. A prior law authorizer that was operating a school itself immediately prior to the effective date of the act (July 14, 2015) is permitted to continue to do so.

Table 1: Independent Charter School Authorizers

1997-99 Budget Act

Common Council of the City of Milwaukee
Chancellor of UW-Milwaukee
Milwaukee Area Technical College District Board

2001-03 Budget Act

Chancellor of UW-Parkside

2015-17 Budget Act

Director of the Office of Educational Opportunity in the
UW System
College of Menominee Nation
Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College
Waukesha County Executive
Gateway Technical College District Board

2017-19 Budget Act

All remaining UW Chancellors
All remaining Technical College District Boards

During the history of the independent charter school program, restrictions have been placed on various authorizers with respect to such things as the geographic area in which they could contract to operate charters, the geographic area in which pupils had to reside to attend the charters, the number of schools they could charter, the grade levels the schools could operate, and the curriculum offered by the charter. Currently, with the following exceptions, there are no limitations on independent charter authorizers with respect to school location, pupil residency, number of charter schools, grade levels, or curriculum:

- the two tribal colleges can authorize up to a total of six charter schools between them.
- the County Executive of Waukesha County can authorize charter schools located in Waukesha County.

Under 2017 Act 30, the Director of the Office of Educational Opportunity (OEO) also has the authority to enter into a contract to establish one recovery charter school in which therapeutic programming and support for pupils in recovery

from substance use disorder or dependency could be provided. Under Act 30, the recovery charter school can operate only high school grades, and enrollment would be limited to no more than 15 pupils. The term of the contract for the school would be limited to four consecutive school years.

In the 2017-18 school year, 14 schools operated under UW-Milwaukee's chartering authority, eight schools operated under the City of Milwaukee's authority, and one operated under the UW-Parkside's authority. These schools are listed in the appendix to this paper. Among the newer authorizers, the Director of the OEO has contracted for the operation of two charter schools (neither of which are a recovery charter), beginning in the 2018-19 school year. These two schools (Isthmus Montessori Academy Public and One City Senior Preschool) are located in the Madison Metropolitan School District.

Authorizing Entity Duties. A school board or an independent charter school authorizer is required to:

1. Solicit and evaluate charter school applications.
2. Consider the principles and standards for quality charter schools established by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers when contracting for the establishment of a charter school.
3. Give preference in awarding contracts for the operation of charter schools to those charter schools that serve children at risk.
4. Approve only high-quality charter school applications that meet identified educational needs and promote a diversity of educational choices.
5. Notify DPI of its intention to create a charter school. The notice must include a description of the proposed school. An independent charter authorizer is required to do so by February 1 of the

previous school year. The Department does not have the authority to approve or deny charter school notifications.

6. Monitor the performance and compliance with state charter school law of each charter school with which it contracts, in accordance with the terms of each charter school contract.

7. Submit an annual report to the State Superintendent and Legislature that includes the following information:

a. An identification of each charter school operating under contract with the authorizer, each charter school that operated under contract with the authorizer but had its contract nonrenewed or revoked or that closed, and each charter school under contract with the authorizer that has not yet begun to operate.

b. The academic and financial performance of each charter school operated under contract with the authorizer.

c. The operating costs of the school board or independent charter school authorizer incurred under its required duties, detailed in an audited financial statement prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

d. The services that the school board or independent charter school authorizer has provided to the charter schools under contract with it and an itemized accounting of the costs of the services.

Charter School Contract. If a charter school is established through the petition process, the school board is required to contract with the person named in the petition to operate the school. The contract must include all of the provisions specified in the petition and may include other provisions agreed upon by the parties. If a charter school is established on the initiative of the school board, the contract must include the 15 provisions required to be a petition for a charter and may include other

provisions agreed upon by the parties.

A school board generally may not enter into a contract for the establishment of a charter school located outside the district. If two or more school boards enter into a contractual agreement to establish a charter school, the school must be located in one of the establishing districts. If one or more school boards enter into an agreement with the board of control of a cooperative educational service agency (CESA) to establish a charter school, the school must be located within the boundaries of the CESA. If a school board enters into an agreement with a federally-recognized American Indian tribe or band in the state to establish a charter school, the school must be located within the district or within the boundaries of the tribe's or band's reservation.

A school board may not enter into a contract that would result in the conversion of a private sectarian school to a charter school.

A charter school contract may be for any term not exceeding five school years and can be renewed for one or more terms not exceeding five school years. The contract must specify the amount to be paid to the charter school during each year of the contract.

A contract with a school board or independent charter school authorizer may provide for the establishment of more than one charter school, and a charter school governing board may enter into more than one contract with a school board or an independent charter school authorizer.

A charter for an independent charter school is required to include all of the items for a petition to establish a charter school by a school board, except: (a) the name of the person who would operate the charter school; (b) the name of the person who would be in charge of the charter school and the manner in which administrative services would be provided; and (c) the effect of the establishment of the charter school on the liability of

the school district. A contract to operate an independent charter school is required to include all of the items required for a petition to establish a charter school by a school board with one exception. Instead of including a description of the effect of the establishment of the charter school on the liability of the school district, the contract must specify the effect of the establishment of the charter school on the liability of the authorizing entity. A contract may include other provisions agreed to by the parties.

A charter or contract for an independent charter school may include grounds for expelling a pupil from the school. If the charter or contract includes those grounds, it must include the procedures to be followed by the school prior to expelling a pupil.

The contracts between the governing boards of independent charter schools and their authorizers are also required to include the following, with one exception for one authorizer noted below:

1. A requirement that a charter school governing board adhere to specified annual academic and operational performance standards developed in accordance with the performance framework of the entity with which it is contracting.

2. Provisions detailing the corrective measures the charter school governing board will take if the charter school fails to meet performance standards.

3. A provision allowing the governing board to open one or more additional charter schools if all of the charter schools operated by the governing board were assigned one of the top two performance categories in the most recent school accountability report published by DPI and, if the charter school governing board opens one or more additional charter schools, the existing contract applies to the new school or schools unless the parties agree to amend the existing contract or enter into a new contract. (This provision does not apply to charter schools authorized by the Director of the

OEO.)

4. The methodology that will be used by the charter school governing board to monitor and verify pupil enrollment, credit accrual, and course completion.

5. A requirement that the authorizing entity have direct access to pupil data.

6. A description of the administrative relationship between the parties to the contract.

7. A requirement that the charter school governing board hold parent-teacher conferences at least annually.

8. A requirement that if more than one charter school is operated under the contract, the charter school governing board report to the authorizing entity on each charter school separately.

9. A requirement that the charter school governing board provide the data needed by the authorizing entity for purposes of making the required annual report to the State Superintendent and Legislature.

10. A requirement that the charter school governing board participate in any training provided by the authorizing entity.

11. A description of all fees the authorizing entity will charge the charter school governing board.

A school board or independent charter school authorizer may enter into a contract for the establishment of a charter school that enrolls only one sex or that provides one or more courses that enroll only one sex if the school board or independent charter school authorizer makes comparable schools or courses available to the opposite sex under the same policies and criteria of admission.

A contract with a school board or independent charter school authorizer must specify that if the

capacity of the charter school is insufficient to accept all pupils who apply, the charter school would have to accept pupils at random. A charter school is required to give preference in enrollment to pupils who were enrolled in the charter school in the previous school year, and to siblings of pupils who are enrolled in the charter school. Charter schools are allowed by law to give preference in enrollment to the children of the charter school's founders, governing board members, and full-time employees, but the total number of such children given preference can be no more than 10% of the charter school's total enrollment.

Under the 2017-19 budget act, a charter school established under a contract with a union high school district may give preference in enrollment to pupils who were enrolled during the previous year in a charter school operating under a cooperative agreement with the charter school established under contract with the union high school district. This provision applies to students attending a charter school authorized by an underlying K-8 school district as they transition to a charter school authorized by the UHS district.

Legal Status. The law specifies, with one exception, that the school board of the school district in which a charter school is located determines whether or not the charter school is an instrumentality of the district. If the board determines that the charter school is an instrumentality of the district, the board must employ all personnel for the charter school. If the board decides the charter school is not an instrumentality of the district, the board cannot employ any personnel for the charter school. The exception to this provision specifies that an independent charter school or a private school located in MPS which is converted to an MPS charter school is not an instrumentality of MPS. Therefore, MPS cannot employ any personnel for such a charter school.

Independent charter schools are considered local education agencies (LEAs) for the purpose of federal law, and as such are eligible for funding as

LEAs and are required to comply with all federal requirements of LEAs. In general, independent charter schools cannot be instrumentalities of any district and no school board may employ any personnel for these charter schools. However, any charter school authorized by the City of Milwaukee that is established and operated by a for-profit entity must be an instrumentality of MPS and all staff employed by the charter school must be employees of MPS.

Charter School Governing Boards. A charter school is required by law to be governed by a governing board that is a party to the contract with the authorizing entity. No more than a minority of the governing board's members may be employees of the charter school or employees or officers of the school district in which the charter school is located.

Subject to the terms of its contract, a charter school governing board has all the powers necessary to carry out the terms of its contract, including the following:

1. To receive and disburse funds for school purposes.
2. To secure appropriate insurance.
3. To enter into contracts, including contracts with a University of Wisconsin institution or college campus, technical college district board, or private college or university, for technical or financial assistance, academic support, curriculum review, or other services.
4. To incur debt in reasonable anticipation of the receipt of funds.
5. To pledge, assign, or encumber its assets to be used as collateral for loans or extensions of credit.
6. To solicit and accept gifts or grants for school purposes.

7. To acquire real property for its use.
8. To sue and be sued in its own name.

A charter school governing board may not charge tuition, with an exception for out-of-state pupils enrolled in virtual charter schools, which is described below.

A charter school governing board is prohibited from discriminating in admission or denying participation in any program or activity on the basis of a person's sex, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability, with an exception for single-sex schools or classes previously described.

A charter school governing board must be non-sectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices and all other operations.

If a charter school replaces a public school, in whole or in part, the charter school governing board must give preference in admission to any pupil residing within the current or former attendance area of that public school.

Charter School Requirements. Charter schools are subject to all federal laws governing education, including the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Unless specified in statute, charter schools are not subject to the provisions of Chapters 115 through 121 of the Wisconsin Statutes, which are generally the provisions that govern K-12 education. Charter schools are required to:

- a. Administer state standardized pupil assessments, including the civics assessment required for high school graduation, to pupils in the required grade levels.
- b. Adopt pupil academic standards in mathematics, science, reading and writing, geography, and history.

- c. Develop and enforce a policy specifying criteria for promoting a pupil from 4th grade to 5th grade, from 8th grade to 9th grade, and for granting a high school diploma. A charter school cannot promote a pupil from 4th to 5th grade or from 8th grade to 9th grade unless the pupil satisfies the promotion criteria, and cannot grant a high school diploma unless the pupil has satisfied these criteria.

- d. Be included in a school district's annual school performance report, DPI school accountability reports, and the statewide student information system.

- e. Participate in the DPI educator effectiveness evaluation system or an alternative process in accordance with DPI administrative rule.

- f. Assess pupils enrolled in four-year-old kindergarten through second grade for reading readiness.

- g. Provide to the parent of each enrolled pupil a list of the educational options available to children who reside in the pupil's resident school district.

- h. Ensure that all of the school's instructional staff hold a license or permit to teach issued by DPI.

The Department has promulgated an administrative rule defining "instructional staff" to mean all professional employees who have direct contact with students or with the instructional program of the school, including teachers, librarians, pupil services staff and administrative staff who supervise licensed staff.

In addition to the standard teacher licensing process, DPI is required by law to grant a charter school teaching license to any person who has a bachelor's degree and demonstrates, based upon criteria established by DPI, that the person is proficient in the subjects that he or she intends to teach. The license authorizes the person to teach in the subject area and grade level of the license in a

non-virtual charter school. Under DPI rule, an applicant can demonstrate satisfactory content knowledge by one of the following: (a) completion of a major or minor at an accredited institution in the subject area of the license; (b) passing a content knowledge examination approved by DPI in the subject area of the license; or (c) passing an assessment process approved by DPI in the subject area of the license. A charter school teacher's license is valid for five years and is renewable.

Pupil Rights. No pupil may be required to attend a charter school without the approval of his or her parents or legal guardian, or the pupil's approval if the pupil is an adult.

Transportation. Charter schools are not required, under current law, to provide transportation for their pupils. Similarly, the law does not specifically include charter pupils among the pupils that school districts are required to transport. However, if the parties agree, then the contract between a charter school and school board or an independent charter school authorizer may provide for the transportation of charter school pupils.

Charter Revocation. A school board or independent charter school authorizer can revoke a contract with a charter school if the board or authorizer finds that any of the following occurred: (a) the school violated the contract; (b) the school's pupils failed to make sufficient progress toward attaining the state's educational goals and expectations; (c) the school failed to comply with generally accepted accounting standards of fiscal management; or (d) the school violated the charter school law.

Virtual Charter School Provisions

Virtual Charter School Requirements. A virtual school is defined in statute as one in which all or a portion of instruction is provided on the Internet, and pupils and staff are geographically remote from each other. In the 2017-18 school year, 38 virtual charter schools (authorized by 32 school districts) enrolled a total of 6,905 pupils. These virtual

charter schools are marked with an asterisk in the list of charter schools in the appendix to this paper.

Access to instructional staff is provided by the virtual schools, but pupils generally complete work independently under the supervision of their parents. Teachers in virtual charters must be appropriately licensed by DPI in the subject and grade level for each virtual course taught. Under the 2017-19 budget act, an individual who holds a license to teach a subject and level in the state from which the online course is provided is considered appropriately licensed to teach the subject and level in Wisconsin. DPI is prohibited by law from requiring professional development for an appropriately-licensed person teaching in a virtual charter school that would not otherwise be required for a similarly-licensed person teaching outside of a virtual charter school. Anyone providing educational services to a virtual charter pupil in the pupil's home who is not instructional staff employed by the school, including the pupil's parent or guardian, is not required to hold a license or permit to teach.

Virtual charter schools are required to provide educational services to pupils at least 150 days each school year, and instructional staff duties are enumerated in statute. Teachers must be available for direct instruction for at least the same number of hours of instruction as are required for regular public school pupils, which varies by grade level, but no more than 10 hours per day can count towards this requirement. Teachers in virtual charter schools must respond to any inquiries by pupils and parents within one full school day. Pupils are required to participate in state pupil assessments.

The governing body of a virtual charter school must establish a parent advisory council that meets regularly. At the beginning of each school term, the governing body must inform its pupils' parents in writing of the names of, and how to contact, the school's staff and the members of the school's governing body, authorizing school board, and parent advisory council.

A virtual charter school is considered to be located in the school district that contracts for the establishment of the school. If a district enters into an agreement with another district or CESA to establish a virtual charter, the school is considered to be located in the district specified under that agreement. If the virtual charter enrolls pupils from outside the school district, other specified requirements under the open enrollment program also apply.

Virtual Charter School Restrictions. Independent charter school authorizers are prohibited from establishing virtual charter schools. Like other charter schools, virtual charters are prohibited from charging tuition, except that virtual operators are required to charge tuition to out-of-state pupils enrolled in the school, in an amount equal to at least the open enrollment transfer amount.

Pupils attending a virtual school are not subject to the usual compulsory school attendance requirements, but are subject to specified requirements regarding participation. Statutes define the equivalent of excused absences for virtual charter school pupils. If a pupil fails to adequately participate in the virtual school, the pupil may be transferred back to his or her resident district, or, if attending a virtual school within the resident district, to another school or program within that district. A parent or guardian may appeal such transfers to DPI.

Charter School Funding

The way in which charter schools are funded differs based on the authorizing entity. Charter schools authorized by a school board receive funding in a manner similar to other public schools, based on whether the pupils attending the schools are residents of the district or not. While independent charter schools receive per pupil funding in a similar manner, their effect on the school finance

system depends on whether or not the authorizing entity had chartering authority prior to the 2015-17 budget act (2015 Act 55).

School District Charters. For a charter school authorized by a school district, the contract between the school board and the person operating the charter school must specify the amount to be paid to the charter school during each school year of the contract. The contract costs are aidable under the equalization formula.

Resident pupils enrolled in a charter school are counted by the school district for revenue limits and general aid purposes. Nonresident pupils may enroll in a charter school through the open enrollment program. Under open enrollment, a pupil may attend a public school outside his or her district of residence, provided the pupil's parent complies with certain application procedures and the applicable acceptance criteria are met. The district of residence counts an open-enrolled pupil for revenue limit and general school aid purposes. The nonresident district operating the charter receives a statutorily-determined per pupil transfer amount, which is equal to \$7,379 for a regular education pupil and \$12,431 for a special education pupil in 2018-19. [For more information on this program, see the Legislative Fiscal Bureau's informational paper entitled, "Open Enrollment Program."]

As a result, a "brick and mortar" charter school that enrolls mostly resident pupils is funded in a manner similar to a traditional non-charter school operated by the district. Conversely, for a virtual charter school that enrolls a large number of non-resident pupils, the contract costs for the services of the private curriculum provider can be primarily funded by the open enrollment payments received from the pupils' school districts of residence.

Independent Charter Schools. DPI is required to pay the operators of an independent charter schools (with the exception of tribal college charters) a statutorily-specified amount per pupil. In 2018-19, that payment is \$8,619 per pupil.

Under current law, the per pupil payment is indexed, so that the payment in a given year is equal to the sum of the amount paid per pupil in the previous year plus the per pupil revenue limit adjustment for the current year, if positive, plus the change in the amount of statewide categorical aid per pupil between the previous year and the current year, if positive. The per pupil payment for a tribal college charter school will be an amount equal to the per pupil academic base funding provided to tribal schools by the federal Bureau of Indian Education in the previous school year.

DPI is required to make payments equal to 25% of the total due to each school in September, December, February and June of each school year and send the check to the operator of the charter school. For payment purposes, independent charter pupils are counted on a full-time equivalency (FTE) basis, rather than a headcount basis. By statute, pupils in grades 1-12 are generally counted as 1.0 FTE pupil, while kindergarten pupils are counted as fractions of a pupil, generally based on the amount of educational programming provided.

Under the 2017-19 budget act, independent charter school operators are eligible to receive payment for summer school pupils, beginning with pupils attending summer school in the summer of 2018. A school is eligible to receive a summer school payment for a pupil if the school offers a minimum of 19 summer days of instruction and each day of summer instruction is comprised of at least 270 minutes of instruction. Each independent charter school must, by September 15, file a report with DPI stating its summer daily attendance for each day of summer school. Schools offering summer school receive an amount equal to 5% of the per pupil payment from the immediately preceding school term if the pupil attends at least 15 days of summer instruction. The payment is prorated based on the number of days attended if the pupil attends fewer than 15 days. DPI must include the entire summer school payment with the December payment installment, but as a separate check.

Payments for the independent charter school program (with the exception of payments to schools authorized by the Director of the OEO) are funded from a sum sufficient appropriation from the general fund. Payments to charter schools authorized by the OEO are made from a separate sum sufficient general fund appropriation.

By law, DPI is required to proportionally reduce the general school aid for which each school district is eligible by an amount totaling the estimated payments for schools chartered by authorizers who had that authority prior to 2015 Act 55 (UW-Milwaukee, the City of Milwaukee, and UW-Parkside). For the October 15, 2018, general school aid distribution, each district's general aid was reduced by nearly 1.5% in 2018-19 to generate a statewide amount equal to the estimated \$71.5 million in independent charter school program expenditures for that year.

A school district's revenue limit calculation is not affected by the aid reduction for independent charter schools established by prior law authorizers. Thus, a school district can increase its property tax levy to offset this aid reduction. Pupils in independent charter schools established by prior law authorizers are not counted by any school district for revenue limit and general aid purposes.

Table 2 shows the number of FTE pupils, the per pupil payment, and program expenditures (as reported in the state's annual fiscal report) for the independent charter school program for each year since 1998-99. (The expenditures shown in the table include, for the relevant years, prior law payments from the independent charter school appropriation to the Racine Unified School District related to the number of pupils attending the UW-Parkside charter school who were previously enrolled in the District.)

Pupils that attend a charter school authorized by any of the five new authorizers under 2015 Act 55 are counted by their district of residence for

revenue limit and general aid purposes. DPI must reduce the district's general aid payment (and categorical aid, if necessary) in an amount equal to the total of the per pupil payments made for pupils residing in the district. Districts are not allowed to levy to backfill, or replace, that aid reduction.

Categorical Aid Eligibility. A charter school established by a school district may participate in categorical school aid and grant programs, but such participation needs to be included in the charter. A district-sponsored non-instrumentality charter school can be reimbursed for special education costs in the same manner as other types of charter schools, if the school board contracts with the charter school to provide special education services to pupils attending the school. A charter school must comply with all requirements associated with the categorical aid program in which it participates.

By statute, independent charter schools are eligible for state special education, pupil transportation, and school lunch categorical aid, as well as special education transitions incentive grants, educator effectiveness grants, and robotics league participation grants. Under the 2017-19 budget act, independent charter schools will be eligible for newly-created programs for special education transition readiness grants, school performance improvement grants, school mental health aid, school based mental health services grants, and grants for personal electronic computing devices. Any categorical aid received by an independent charter school is in addition to the statutory per pupil payment.

Table 2: Independent Charter School Program Expenditures

	FTE Pupils	Per Pupil Payment	Expenditures (In Millions)
1998-99	55	\$6,062	\$0.4
1999-00	193	6,272	1.2
2000-01	1,411	6,494	9.2
2001-02	2,046	6,721	13.8
2002-03	3,360	6,951	24.2
2003-04	3,601	7,050	26.7
2004-05	4,066	7,111	30.0
2005-06	4,473	7,519	34.8
2006-07	4,826	7,669	38.5
2007-08	5,487	7,669	43.5
2008-09	5,296	7,775	42.7
2009-10	6,124	7,775	48.9
2010-11	7,159	7,775	56.9
2011-12	6,863	7,775	54.4
2012-13	7,459	7,775	58.7
2013-14	7,964	7,925	63.1
2014-15	8,413	8,075	67.9
2015-16	8,807	8,079	71.3
2016-17	7,526	8,188	61.6
2017-18	7,813	8,395	65.6
2018-19	8,450*	8,619	72.9*

*Estimated

operation in 2017-18 by school district or chartering authority. The September headcount enrollment of and grade levels operated by each charter school for that year are also shown. Virtual charter schools are marked with an asterisk in the appendix.

In 2017-18, 231 charter schools were open, chartered by 99 authorizers. In total, enrollment in all types of charter schools was nearly 42,500 in 2017-18.

Appendix

The appendix lists the charter schools in

APPENDIX

Wisconsin Charter Schools 2017-18 School Year

<u>District/Authorizer</u>	<u>School Name</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Grade Level(s)</u>
School District Authorized Charter Schools			
Albany	Albany Community Middle	79	6-8
Appleton Area	Appleton Bilingual School	172	K-6
Appleton Area	Appleton eSchool *	18	7-12
Appleton Area	Appleton Public Montessori	157	K4-6
Appleton Area	Appleton Technical Academy	77	9-12
Appleton Area	Classical School	484	K-8
Appleton Area	Fox Cities Leadership Academy	96	9-12
Appleton Area	Fox River Academy	116	K-8
Appleton Area	Kaleidoscope Academy	633	6-8
Appleton Area	Renaissance School	159	9-12
Appleton Area	Stephen Foster Elementary Charter	323	PK-6
Appleton Area	Tesla Engineering Charter School	130	9-12
Appleton Area	Valley New School	67	7-12
Appleton Area	Wisconsin Connections Academy *	548	K-12
Ashland	Lake Superior High	14	9-12
Ashland	Lake Superior Learning Community	64	3-5
Ashland	Oredocker Project School	47	6-8
Augusta	Wildlands Charter School	72	7-12
Barron Area	Advanced Learning Academy of Wisconsin *	51	K-12
Barron Area	Barron Area Montessori School	50	K4-3
Beloit	Roy Chapman Andrews Academy	33	6-12
Birchwood	Birchwood Blue Hills Charter School	10	7-12
Birchwood	Birchwood Public Montessori	48	K4-6
Birchwood	Bobcat Virtual Academy *	14	K4-12
Blair-Taylor	SoSET Charter School	57	K-6
Butternut	Promethean Charter School	2	9-12
Cameron	Cameron Academy of Virtual Education *	82	K4-12
Cameron	North Star Academy	40	9-12
Chequamegon	Class ACT Charter	21	9-12
Chetek-Weyerhaeuser	Link2Learn Virtual Charter School *	43	K4-12
Columbus	Discovery Charter School	113	K-3
Cumberland	Island City Academy	37	7-12
Cumberland	Island City Virtual Academy *	15	K4-12
D C Everest Area	D C Everest Idea School	71	6-12
De Soto Area	De Soto Virtual School *	14	K-12
Denmark	Denmark Community School	32	7-12
Eau Claire Area	Chippewa Valley Montessori Charter School	289	K4-5
Eau Claire Area	McKinley Charter School	158	6-12
Elkhorn Area	Elkhorn Options Virtual School *	176	K4-12
Elkhorn Area	Walworth County Educ. Consortium Alternative High School	88	9-12
Fond du Lac	Fond du Lac STEM Academy	59	3-5
Fond du Lac	Fond du Lac STEM Institute	112	6-10
Glenwood City	Transitional Skills Center	3	10-12
Grantsburg	iForward *	539	6-12
Green Bay Area	John Dewey Academy of Learning	59	8-12

<u>District/Authorizer</u>	<u>School Name</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Grade Level(s)</u>
Greendale	Time 4 Learning Charter School	101	K4
Hartland-Lakeside J3	Hartland Fine Arts Leadership Academy	62	K-2
Hayward Community	Hayward Center for Individualized Learning *	229	K4-12
Hayward Community	Northern Waters Environmental School	39	6-12
Highland	Highland Community Elementary	154	K4-5
Highland	Highland Community High	82	9-12
Highland	Highland Community Middle	75	6-8
Hortonville	Fox West Academy	59	6-8
Janesville	ARISE Virtual Academy *	100	K-12
Janesville	Rock River Charter School	211	6-12
Janesville	Rock University High	48	10-12
Janesville	TAGOS Leadership Academy	55	7-12
Kaukauna Area	New Directions Learning Community	239	K4-4
Kaukauna Area	Park Community Charter School	216	K-4
Kenosha	Brompton School	214	K-8
Kenosha	Dimensions of Learning Academy	219	K-8
Kenosha	Harborside Academy	601	6-12
Kenosha	Kenosha eSchool K-12 *	62	K-12
Kenosha	Kenosha School of Technology Enhanced Curriculum	1,226	K4-8
Kettle Moraine	High School of Health Sciences	166	9-12
Kettle Moraine	KM Explore	138	K-5
Kettle Moraine	KM Global School for Global Leadership and Innovation *	90	9-12
Kettle Moraine	School for Arts and Performance	150	9-12
Kewaskum	i4Learning Community School	107	K4-5
Kiel Area	Kiel eSchool *	5	7-12
LaCrosse	7 Rivers Community High	41	9-12
LaCrosse	Coulee Montessori Charter School	169	K4-8
LaCrosse	La Crosse Design Institute	53	6-8
LaCrosse	LaCrossroads Charter	37	9-12
LaCrosse	School of Technology and Arts I	130	K-5
LaCrosse	School of Technology and Arts II	39	6-8
Lake Mills Area	JEDI Virtual K-12 *	127	K4-12
Little Chute Area	Flex Academy	74	K-8
Little Chute Area	Little Chute Career Pathways Academy	151	9-12
Lodi	Ouisconsin School of Collaboration	80	3-5
Madison Metropolitan	Badger Rock Middle	88	6-8
Madison Metropolitan	Nuestro Mundo	309	K-5
Manitowoc	McKinley Academy	54	9-12
Marshall	Marshall Charter	9	9-12
Mauston	iLEAD Charter School	45	7-12
Mauston	Mauston Montessori Charter School	45	K4-3
McFarland	Destinations Career Academy of Wisconsin High *	77	9-12
McFarland	Insight School of Wisconsin High *	49	9-12
McFarland	Wisconsin Virtual Academy High (WIVA) *	890	9-12
McFarland	Wisconsin Virtual Academy K-8 (WIVA) *	875	K-8
Medford Area	Rural Virtual Academy *	540	K4-12
Merrill Area	Bridges Virtual Academy *	744	K4-12
Merrill Area	Maple Grove School	83	K-5
Merrill Area	Merrill Adult Diploma Academy	21	10-12
Middleton-Cross Plains	21st Century eSchool *	38	K-12

<u>District/Authorizer</u>	<u>School Name</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Grade Level(s)</u>
Middleton-Cross Plains	Clark Street Community School	94	9-12
Milwaukee	ALBA - Academia de Lenguaje y Bellas Artes	494	K3-5
Milwaukee	Alliance School of Milwaukee	203	9-12
Milwaukee	Carmen High School - South Campus	365	9-12
Milwaukee	Carmen High School - Southeast Campus	367	9-12
Milwaukee	Carmen Middle/High School - Northwest Campus	653	6-12
Milwaukee	Daniels University Preparatory Academy	210	K4-8
Milwaukee	HAPA - Hmong American Peace Academy	1,594	K4-12
Milwaukee	Highland Community School	409	K3-8
Milwaukee	Honey Creek Elementary	403	K3-5
Milwaukee	I.D.E.A.L. Charter School	323	K3-8
Milwaukee	La Causa Charter School	788	K4-8
Milwaukee	Milwaukee College Preparatory School - 36th Street	508	K4-8
Milwaukee	Milwaukee College Preparatory School - 38th Street	504	K4-8
Milwaukee	Milwaukee College Preparatory School - Lloyd Street	498	K4-8
Milwaukee	Milwaukee College Preparatory School - North	500	K4-8
Milwaukee	Milwaukee Community Cyber High	189	9-12
Milwaukee	Milwaukee Environmental Science Academy	405	K4-8
Milwaukee	Milwaukee Excellence Charter School	239	6-12
Milwaukee	Next Door Charter	304	K3-K
Milwaukee	Northwest Opportunities Vocational Academy	99	9-12
Milwaukee	Whittier Elementary	220	K3-5
Minocqua J1	Creative Minds	36	3-5
Minocqua J1	Woodland Progressive School for 21st Century Citizens	41	6-8
Monona Grove	Monona Grove Liberal Arts Charter School for the 21st Century	41	9-12
Montello	High Marq Environmental Charter School	30	7-12
Montello	Montello Junior/Senior High	337	6-12
Montello	Montello Virtual Charter School *	19	K-12
Mukwonago	Eagleville Charter School	96	K-6
Neenah	ACE Alliance Charter Elementary	124	K-5
Nekoosa	Central Wisconsin STEM Academy	30	4-8
New Lisbon	Juneau County Charter School	5	7-12
New London	Catalyst Academy	29	7-12
New London	Next Generation Academy	58	7-12
New Richmond	NR4Kids Charter School	244	K4
Northern Ozaukee	Wisconsin Virtual Learning *	315	K4-12
Northland Pines	Northland Pines Montessori Learning Center (NPMLC)	69	K4-4
Northland Pines	School of Options & Applied Research High	21	8-12
Northland Pines	School of Options & Applied Research Middle	55	5-8
Northwood	NorthStar Community Charter School	19	4-8
Northwood	Northwood Elementary	151	K4-5
Northwood	Northwood High/Middle	170	6-12
Northwood	Northwood Virtual Charter School *	1	K4-12
Oconto Falls	Falls Alternative Learning Site (FALS)	9	9-12
Oconto Falls	New Path	10	6-12
Oconto	Bayshore Community Academy	79	5-8
Osceola	Osceola Charter Preschool	91	K4
Oshkosh Area	Accelerated Advanced Learning Program	60	4-8
Oshkosh Area	Shapiro STEM Academy	271	K4-5
Prairie du Chien Area	Mighty River Academy of Virtual Education *	28	K-12

<u>District/Authorizer</u>	<u>School Name</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Grade Level(s)</u>
Rhineland	Northwoods Community Elementary	105	K4-5
Rice Lake Area	Northern Lakes Regional Academy	45	9-12
Richland	Richland Online Academy *	21	6-12
Ripon	Catalyst Charter Middle	133	6-8
Ripon	Journey	131	K-2
Ripon	Lumen Charter High	60	9-12
Ripon	Quest Charter School	145	3-5
River Falls	Renaissance Charter Academy	34	9-12
River Falls	River Falls Public Montessori Academy	163	K4-6
River Valley	River Valley Arena Community Elementary	97	PK-5
Rosendale-Brandon	Cirrus Charter High	13	9-12
Saint Croix Central	Saint Croix Academy of Virtual Education *	78	K-12
Sauk Prairie	Merrimac Community	110	PK-5
Shawano	LEADS Primary Charter School	53	K4-2
Sheboygan Area	Central High	215	9-12
Sheboygan Area	Etude Elementary	185	PK-5
Sheboygan Area	Etude High	135	9-12
Sheboygan Area	Etude Middle	94	6-8
Sheboygan Area	George D Warriner High School for Personalized Learning *	129	9-12
Sheboygan Area	George D Warriner Middle *	71	6-8
Sheboygan Area	Lake Country Academy - Charter	429	K4-8
Sheboygan Area	Northeast Wisconsin Montessori Charter School	21	1-6
Sheboygan Area	Sheboygan Leadership Academy	211	K4-8
Shorewood	New Horizons for Learning	21	9-12
Sparta Area	Innovations STEM Academy	60	6-8
Sparta Area	Lakeview Montessori School	171	K4-6
Sparta Area	Sparta Alternative Independent Learning School	24	9-12
Sparta Area	Sparta Charter Prekindergarten	170	K4-PK
Sparta Area	Sparta High Point School	48	7-12
Stevens Point Area	CARE Concerned About Reaching Everyone	16	7-9
Stevens Point Area	Point of Discovery School	97	6-8
Tomah Area	Tomah Area Montessori School	57	K4-4
Tomorrow River	Tomorrow River Community Charter	142	K4-6
Tomorrow River	Tomorrow River Virtual Charter School (TRVCS) *	15	K4-6
Turtle Lake	Laker Online *	1	K4-12
Two Rivers	Lighthouse Learning Academy *	68	K4-12
Verona Area	Core Knowledge Charter School	416	K-8
Verona Area	Exploration Academy	76	9-12
Verona Area	New Century School	123	K-5
Verona Area	Verona Area International School	97	K-5
Viroqua Area	Laurel High	44	9-12
Viroqua Area	Vernon County Area Better Futures High	7	10-12
Viroqua Area	Viroqua Area Montessori School	105	K4-6
Watertown	Endeavor Charter School	45	9-12
Waukesha	eAchieve Academy - Wisconsin *	632	6-12
Waukesha	eAchieve Elementary *	73	K-5
Waukesha	Waukesha Academy of Health Professions	145	9-12
Waukesha	Waukesha East Alternative School	114	9-12
Waukesha	Waukesha Engineering Preparatory Academy	185	9-12
Waukesha	Waukesha STEM Academy	784	K4-8

<u>District/Authorizer</u>	<u>School Name</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Grade Level(s)</u>
Waupun	School for Agricultural and Environmental Studies	108	K4-6
Wausau	Enrich Excel Achieve Learning Academy	71	6-12
Wausau	Wausau Engineering and Global Leadership Academy	58	9-12
Wausau	Wausau Area Montessori Charter School	127	K-6
Wauwatosa	Wauwatosa STEM	135	K-5
Wauwatosa	Wauwatosa Virtual Academy *	127	6-12
West Allis	Shared Journeys	14	7-12
West Bend	Pathways	58	7-12
West DePere	Phantom Knight School of Opportunity	18	7-12
Weyauwega-Fremont	Waupaca County Charter	7	6-12
Whitnall	CORE4	113	K4
Wisconsin Rapids	Mead Elementary Charter School	367	K4-5
Wonewoc-Union Center	Wonewoc-Center Virtual Academy *	<u>1</u>	K-12
	Subtotal - School District Authorized Charter Schools	34,314	
Independent Charter Schools			
City of Milwaukee	Central City Cyberschool	393	K4-8
City of Milwaukee	Darrell Lynn Hines Academy	286	K4-8
City of Milwaukee	Downtown Montessori	285	K3-8
City of Milwaukee	Escuela Verde	120	7-12
City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Academy of Science	1,064	K4-12
City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Collegiate Academy	287	9-12
City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Math and Science Academy	307	K4-8
City of Milwaukee	Rocketship Southside Community Prep	531	K4-5
UW-Milwaukee	Bruce Guadalupe	1,288	K4-8
UW-Milwaukee	Capitol West Academy	253	K4-8
UW-Milwaukee	La Casa de Esperanza Charter School	146	K4-8
UW-Milwaukee	Milwaukee Scholars Charter School	642	K4-8
UW-Milwaukee	Pathways High	79	9-12
UW-Milwaukee	Penfield Montessori Academy	107	K3-8
UW-Milwaukee	School for Early Development and Achievement (SEDA)	81	K3-2
UW-Milwaukee	Seeds of Health Elementary Program	435	K4-8
UW-Milwaukee	Stellar Collegiate Charter School	120	K4-5
UW-Milwaukee	Tenor High	227	9-12
UW-Milwaukee	United Community Center Acosta Middle School	113	6-8
UW-Milwaukee	Veritas High	252	9-12
UW-Milwaukee	Woodlands School	351	K4-8
UW-Milwaukee	Woodlands School - State Street Campus	282	K4-8
UW-Parkside	21st Century Preparatory School	<u>536</u>	K4-8
	Subtotal - Independent Charter Schools	8,185	
	Total Charter School Enrollment	42,499	

* Virtual charter school