

Major Education Law Rankings Reveal Surprising State Leaders, Biggest Movers, and New Top Performers

2026 National Charter School Law Scorecard grades charter school laws, identifying where lawmakers expanded educational opportunity—and where barriers remain.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, August 5, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As parents navigate back-to-school options and charter school enrollment increases nationwide, the Center for Education Reform (CER) today released its 2026 [National Charter School Law Rankings and Scorecard](#), now nearly three decades into its run as the nation's longest-running analysis of state charter school laws. The Scorecard reveals which states have fostered environments for charter schools to open, grow, and expand, and which states are falling behind.



The Scorecard grades charter law across four areas: Authorization (whether multiple, independent entities can approve charter schools), Growth (room for schools to open and expand), Operations (the degree of autonomy charter schools receive from district and state rules), and Equity (whether funding is fair, and how the law functions in practice — not just on paper).

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Jeanne Allen, CER Founder & CEO

In 2026 the Top 10 and the strongest charter law states are: Florida, Arizona, Indiana, Michigan, District of Columbia, Minnesota, North Carolina, Iowa, Ohio, Utah

The Bottom 10 and the weakest charter law states are: Maine, Alaska, Illinois, Washington, Connecticut, Maryland, Rhode Island, Kentucky, Kansas, Virginia.

This year's movement and highlights:

- Iowa (#8, B) posted a sharp turnaround, rising from #11 to the top ten this year, driven by a sustained legislative overhaul, just four short years after being rated an F law.
- Florida (#1, A-) holds the top spot for the third year in a row, with Arizona (#2, A-) and Indiana (#3, A-) close behind.
- Ohio (#9, B-) jumped nine spots this year, a major ranking increase due to stronger fidelity to the intent and written word of laws already on the books.
- Utah (#10, B-) climbed four spots after making education funding more equitable for charter students.
- Idaho (#14, B-), New York (#13, B-), and Wisconsin (#15, B-) fell in rank, not because their laws weakened, but because other states moved faster.
- Rhode Island (#45, D-) enacted a moratorium on new charter schools this year, running counter to the states gaining ground.

Nineteen of the 48 states with charter school laws — 40 percent — earned a grade of B- or better this year, putting them in good-to-great territory. Only three states earned an A or A-. Sixteen earned a B+, B, or B-. Nineteen landed in the C range. And ten states earned a D or F.

After Thirty Years, the Work Isn't Finished

Since launching the first national charter school law rankings in the mid-nineties, CER has never awarded a perfect score.

"These rankings don't measure intent—they measure what the written law actually produces, the results," said [Jeanne Allen](#), founder and CEO of the Center for Education Reform. "The strongest states continue strengthening laws that allow these great new public schools to flourish. The weakest still deny too many families access to opportunity."

Charter schools ignited the modern movement for education innovation and freedom. Today's expanding landscape of educational options stands on that foundation.

Full historical rankings, methodology, and state-by-state summaries available at www.edreform.com/rankings. Media inquiries: press@edreform.com.

The Scorecard is a key component of CER's broader [Parent Power! Index](#), a dashboard for educational opportunity for parents. The updated Index, incorporating this year's charter law scores, will be released later this year.

About CER: Since 1993, the Center for Education Reform (CER) has worked to expand educational opportunities that lead to improved economic outcomes for all Americans — particularly our youth — ensuring that the conditions are ripe for innovation, freedom, and flexibility throughout U.S. education, and is home to the Yass Prize. Learn more at edreform.com.

Aaron Tesauro

Center for Education Reform

+1 530-255-4650

press@edreform.com

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