

AUTHORIZING

POLICY COMPONENT	STATE POLICY DESCRIPTION
<p><u>Eligible Authorizing Entities</u>, with a focus on:</p> <p>* Does the state provide direct access to a non-district authorizer?</p>	<p>POLICY: Pennsylvania law provides the following potential authorizers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local school boards, Two or more local school boards for regional charters, and The State Department of Education for appealed cyber charter schools. <p>CITATION: Penn. Art. XVII-A § 1717-A, Penn. Art. XVII-A § 1718-A, and Penn. Art. XVII-A § 1741-A</p> <p>IMPACT: 93% of the state’s charter schools are authorized by 51 school districts. 7% are authorized by the State Department of Education.</p>
<p><u>Contract Terms</u>, with a focus on:</p> <p>* Does the state require at least a five-year initial contract term?</p> <p>* Does the state give authorizers the flexibility to vary renewal contract terms based upon performance?</p>	<p>POLICY: Pennsylvania law provides that initial charters can be no less than three years and not more than five years. In most districts, the law provides for 5-year renewals. It also allows authorizers that are school districts of the first class (Philadelphia) to sign 1-year renewal contracts if adequate data does not exist to warrant a full 5-year renewal.</p> <p>CITATION: Penn. Art. XVII-A § 1720-A</p>
<p><u>Appeals Process</u>, with a focus on:</p> <p>* Does the state allow applicants to appeal denials to a different entity?</p>	<p>Policy: Pennsylvania law provides that applications denied by local school boards can be appealed to a state appeals board. If approved by the state appeals board, the law requires the chair of the state appeals board to sign the written charter if the local school board still refuses to grant the charter.</p> <p>Citation: Penn. Art. XVII-A § 1716-A</p>
<p><u>Expedited Renewal, Replication, or Expansion Process for High-Performing Schools</u>, with a focus on:</p> <p>* Does the state have expedited renewal, replication, and expansion processes for high-performing charter schools?</p>	<p>None.</p>

CAPS

POLICY COMPONENT	STATE POLICY DESCRIPTION
<p><u>Caps on Charter School Growth</u>, with a focus on:</p> <p>* Does the state not place any caps on charter school growth?</p>	<p>POLICY: Pennsylvania law does not place any caps on charter school growth.</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Pennsylvania’s authorizing policies can be improved by:

- Creating a non-district authorizer such as a state charter school commission and allowing applicants to apply directly to it;
- Requiring initial charter terms of five years;
- Allowing authorizers to provide renewal terms of longer than five years because of strong charter school performance; and
- Providing expedited renewal, replication, and expansion processes for high-performing schools.