



## Charter School Legislation - 2011

### Key Components

The 2011 charter school legislation is based on the model bill developed by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, which incorporates the experience and best practices that have evolved nationally since 1992.

The legislation has also benefited by the ideas of many stakeholders across Maine. It is designed to reflect current realities in our state and to address public education needs unique to Maine.

- 1. Eligibility for Federal Charter School Grants** – The legislation will qualify Maine for the federal start-up and planning grants for charter schools, which require no state match.
- 2. Multiple Authorizers** – The legislation will designate as authorizers: 1) local and regional school districts; 2) a State Charter Commission, operating as an expanded subcommittee of the State Board of Education; and 3) colleges and universities based in Maine that award 4 year degrees in education. A prospective charter school may only submit a proposal to authorizers that announce they are accepting applications.
- 3. Accountability for Authorizers** – The legislation will contain detailed provisions to enhance the quality of charter school authorizers and their oversight of the charter schools that they approve and monitor.
- 4. Performance Contracts for Operators** – The legislation will require detailed performance contracts between authorizers and operators.
- 5. Funding** – For annual operating funds, the same per-pupil allocations that towns now spend on each child will follow each child to the public district or public charter school that he or she attends. For facilities, charter schools will not participate in the state school construction fund, but can apply for private loans or grants, and they will have access to un-used or under-used public facilities.
- 7. Teachers** – All full-time teachers in charter schools must either hold an appropriate teaching certificate or become certified within three years of the date they are hired, excepting those with an advanced degree, professional certification, or unique expertise and/or experience in the curricular area they teach. Teachers at a charter school will be able to choose to bargain collectively or form a professional group.
- 8. Education Management Organizations** – Public charter schools will be allowed to contract with not-for-profit or for-profit entities for management services.
- 9. Virtual Chartered Schools** – The legislation adopts the language of the national model bill that defines and allows virtual chartered schools.
- 10. Protection for Small Districts** – The legislation prohibits charter schools from enrolling more than 10% of children in a grade level within a district, although this prohibition would not apply to conversions of existing public schools or programs.
- 11. Protection for Small Towns** – If a local board approves the conversion of its only public school to a charter school, the conversion would have to be approved by the voters in that school administrative unit.