

What is a Charter School?

A charter school is a public school that operates as a school of choice. Charter schools commit to obtaining specific educational objectives in return for a charter to operate a school. Charter schools are exempt from significant state or local regulations related to operation and management, but otherwise adhere to regulations of public schools – for example, charter schools cannot charge tuition or be affiliated with a religious institution.

In other words, charter schools are publicly **accountable** – they rely on families choosing to enroll their children, and they must have a written performance contract with an authorized public chartering agency. Charter schools are also **autonomous** – they have more flexibility in the operations and management of the school than traditional public schools.

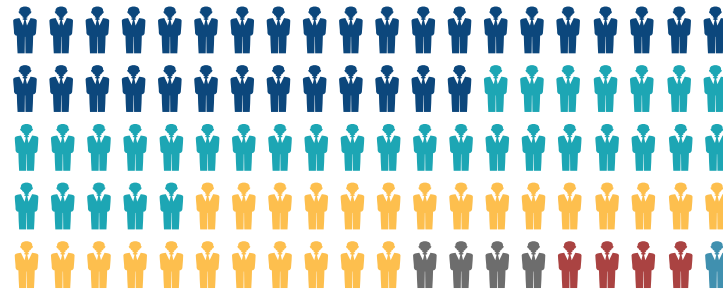
Number of charter schools
as of 2018–2019

7,486



Number of students served as of Fall 2016:
3 million

Demographics of students served:



33%

Hispanic

4%

Asian/Pacific Islander

32%

White

4%

Two or more races

26%

Black

1%

American Indian/
Alaskan Native

Source: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cgb.asp

Geographic areas served by charter schools
as of SY 2016–2017:



Urban areas:

56%

Suburban areas:

26%

Rural areas:

11%

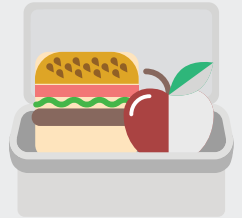
Towns:

7%

Source: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cla.asp

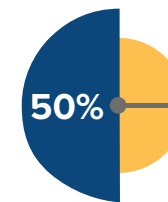
Percentage of charter schools serving
high proportions of Free-
and Reduced-Price Lunch
(FRPL)-eligible students
in SY 2016-2017:

58%



Note: High proportions as defined by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).
Source: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cla.asp

Public perceptions of charter schools
as of Fall 2019:



Percentage of
parents who
support the
formation of
charter schools



Source: <https://www.educationnext.org/2019-ednext-poll-interactive/>

Number and type of charter school
authorizers as of 2017:

999

Number of charter school
authorizers

895

Number of LEAs/public school
districts with authorizing capacity

19

Number of state education agencies with
authorizing capacity

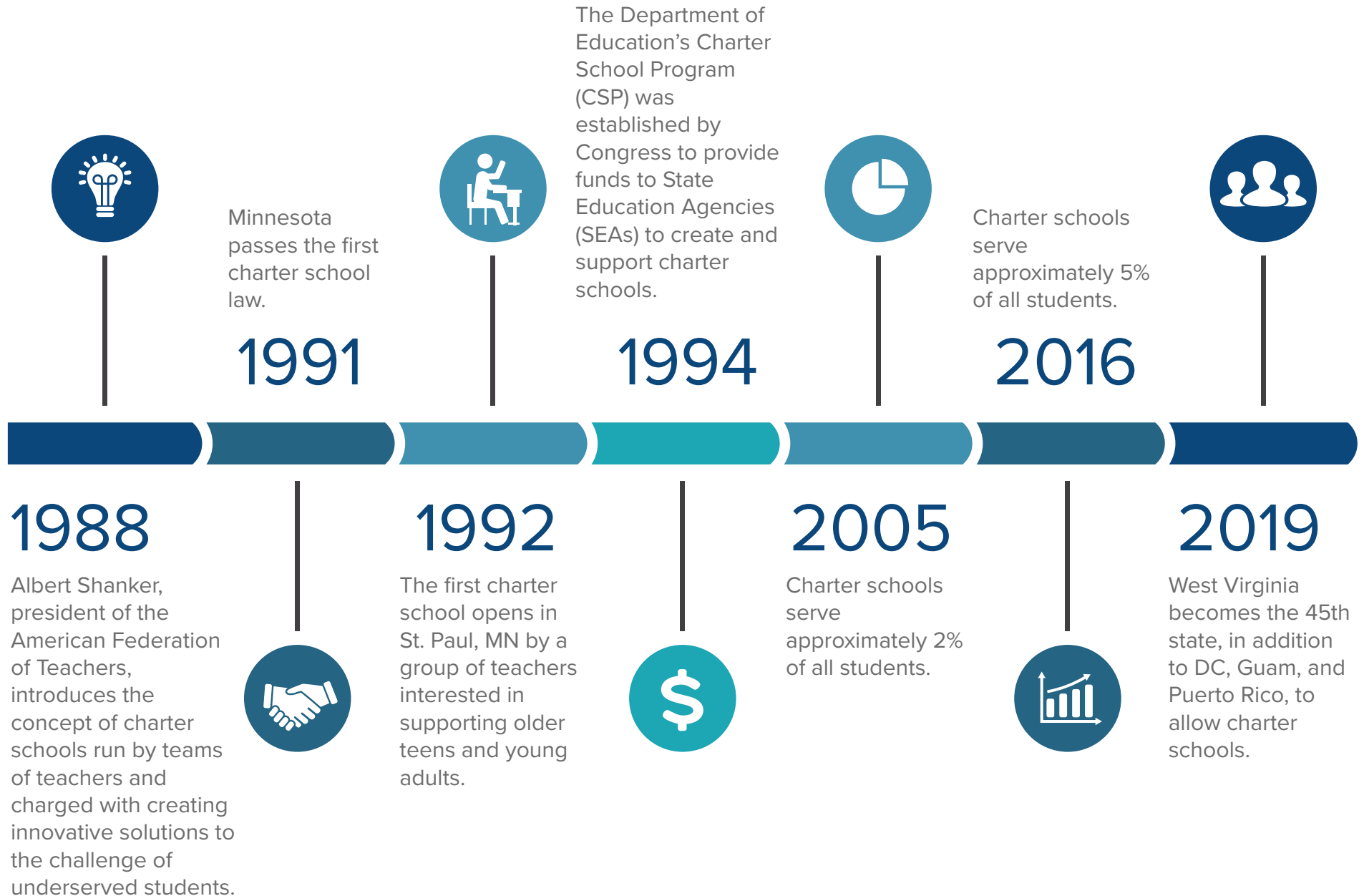
85

Number of other authorizing bodies, including
NGOs and institutions of higher education



Source: <https://www.qualitycharters.org/authorizing-by-the-numbers/authorizer-demographics/>

A Brief History of Charter Schools in America



The Life Cycle of a Charter School

