



SERVING THE ENTIRE CHARTER SCHOOL SECTOR

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GOVERNOR BEVIN SIGNS CHARTER SCHOOL LAW FOR KENTUCKY

Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin signed legislation enacting Kentucky's first charter school law – making it the 44th state to allow independently operated, free public charter schools.

As a charter school governance consultant with 18 years of experience, I am grateful for the passage of the new law! Kentucky is drawing upon many of the best practices learned from different state laws over the past 25 years, while considering the needs of Kentucky families. H.B. 520 bill would not have passed without the leadership of Representative John “Bam” Carney, the Chairman of the House Education Committee, Senate President Pro Tempore David Givens, and Senate Education Committee Chairman Mike Wilson. The state's families should be thankful for their support and Gov. Bevin's focus on the needs of our Kentucky children.

Bills to enact a charter school law in Kentucky have been filed in the Kentucky General Assembly since 2008. After years of legislative efforts, educational choice will now be a reality in Kentucky. National charter advocates **applauded** the legislation, which may allow approved authorizers to begin considering charter applications starting in the 2017-2018 school year.

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools is the leading national nonprofit organization committed to advancing the public charter school movement. Their President and CEO Nina Rees stated, "The passage of H.B. 520 is a win for Kentucky students, and will open the door for new high-quality schools to open in the Bluegrass State."

The passage of this law is only the first step towards improving the education provided to Kentucky families. The public must be educated on the benefits and importance of effective charter schools. The legislation charges the State Board of Education with promulgating regulations to support implementation of the law. Next, authorizer processes will be established to guide applications, review applicants, evaluate performance and provide effective oversight of the much needed Kentucky schools of choice.

Work from the Center for Education Reform, the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, the Kentucky Pastors in Action Coalition, Greater Louisville Inc., the Foundation for Excellence in Education, the Campaign for School Equity, the National Association of Charter School Authorizers and the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools has driven us to this point, and Kentucky educational choice advocates will need to continue working together to broaden support across the state.

It's critical that Kentucky establish a solid foundation on which we can build a strong charter school movement for the Bluegrass state. We should consider quality authorizing models such as Indianapolis Mayor's Office of Education Innovation when developing Kentucky's charter school processes so that Kentucky students and families can benefit from that which has been learned throughout the charter school sector over the past years. Congratulations Kentucky!

This article is published by Yvonne Adkins of Adkins & Company, a Kentucky-based consulting group whose mission is to position charter schools for success by providing boards, operators and authorizers with access to high quality services and expertise.

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