

# COLORADO

**RANK 35, SCORE 10/33**



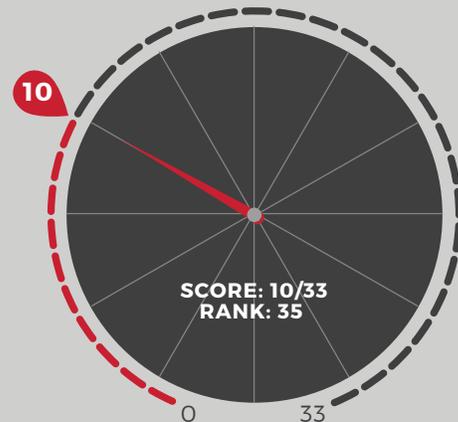
STATE WITH MANY CHARTERS (100+)  
**226** CHARTER SCHOOLS  
 ABOVE AVERAGE % OF PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT (10+%)



**DISTRICT AUTHORIZING STATE**  
**45** AUTHORIZERS  
**84%** OF SCHOOLS AUTHORIZED BY LEAS



YEAR LAW ESTABLISHED: **1993**



## YEARLY COMPARISON

	1. Who Authorizes (6 points)	2. Standards (3 points)	3. Evaluations (3 points)	4. Sanctions (3 points)	5. Reports (3 points)	6. PMR (3 points)	7. Renewals (6 points)	8. Default Closure (6 points)	Total (33 points)
2016	2	3	0	0	3	2	0	0	10/33
2015	2	3	0	0	3	2	0	0	10/33

## NEXT STRONG MOVE: DEFAULT CLOSURE

Big 2016 legislative victories were won in areas of charter school facilities and operational flexibility. The state should continue improvements in the sector with a default closure law.

### NACSA RECOMMENDS

- **Institute a default closure provision.** Enforcement of charter school accountability has been inconsistent among Colorado authorizers. A default closure provision will ensure that failing charter schools are considered for closure. Colorado is well positioned to adopt such a policy because of the state’s existing well-developed accountability system and the willingness of the state’s charter school membership organization to include a default closure provision in its 2016 legislative agenda.
- **Institute a strong renewal standard.** Empower authorizers to close schools that fail to achieve the performance goals set out in their charter contracts.
- **Codify in state law the expectation that all authorizers use performance frameworks.** Performance frameworks used by Denver Public Schools and the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI) are already promoted in the state for use by all authorizers.
- **Transform the Colorado Charter School Institute into a statewide Independent Charter Board.** Currently, CSI’s authority is limited to jurisdictions that do not retain exclusive chartering authority, either by choice or due to state revocation. The CSI should be able to directly authorize charter schools across the state.

## THE SCORE

### POLICY POINTS DETAILS & CONTEXT

#### AUTHORIZER QUALITY

Who Authorizes	2/6	LEAs, Independent Charter Board (ICB) with limited jurisdiction; SEA considers appeals. <sup>1</sup> The Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI) is a limited-jurisdiction ICB. The CSI was established to serve as both an alternative authorizer and as a model authorizer for the state. The CSI may authorize charter schools directly in the nine districts that do not currently have exclusive authorizing authority. Districts may not have exclusive authorizing authority for a variety of reasons, including voluntary relinquishment (either wholesale or for a particular school or applicant) or forcible loss after demonstrating a pattern of treating charters in a hostile manner.
Authorizer Standards	3/3	State law requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt authorizer standards. The SBE's final rules reference NACSA's <i>Principles &amp; Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing</i> . Authorizer practices around the state have achieved some consistency due to the establishment of authorizer standards and a collaborative effort among districts, the CSI, the State Department of Education, and the Colorado League of Charter Schools to improve authorizing. At the same time, the small scale of authorizing by the majority of Colorado's LEA authorizers remains an ongoing challenge.
Authorizer Evaluations	0/3	State law does not require or provide for the evaluation of authorizers based on standards for quality authorizing.
Authorizer Sanctions	0/3	State law does not provide for authorizer sanctions that restrict the granting of new charters by the authorizer, remove schools from the authorizer's portfolio, or remove authorizing authority. Colorado has a limited form of authorizer sanctions through the SBE's power to remove a district's Exclusive Chartering Authority (ECA) for cause. Legislation passed in 2016 expands the grounds under which a district's ECA can be challenged. When successfully invoked, a charter applicant may seek authorization directly from the CSI.

#### SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY

Reports on Performance	3/3	State law requires the ICB and LEAs to produce an annual public report on the academic performance of their portfolio of schools. State law requires all LEAs to provide an annual report to the State Department of Education, which by regulation must include school performance data.
Performance Management and Replication	2/3	State law requires the use of a charter contract but not performance frameworks. In practice, the State Department of Education's School Performance Framework is established in policy and promoted as a model tool to be used by district authorizers statewide for all schools, but it is not explicitly tied to charter school oversight. A single charter board may hold multiple charters.
Renewal Standard	0/6	State law allows "adequate progress" to be sufficient for a charter school to be renewed.
Default Closure	0/6	State law does not provide for default closure for failure to meet minimum academic standards.

**TOTAL POINTS: 10/33, RANK 35**

<sup>1</sup> The SBE is the official appellate body. If the SBE overturns a decision by an LEA, the school is first remanded back to the LEA for its authorization. If the LEA refuses to authorize the school, the SBE may order the establishment of the school. At that point, the LEA is the authorizer. The SBE can also review the CSI's decision to deny an application or to revoke or non-renew one of its charter schools. After review, the State Board can instruct the CSI to establish, renew, or reinstate the charter school.