
Education Committee

HB 1676

Brief Description: Reassigning and authorizing surrendered, revoked, or nonrenewed charter school contracts.

Sponsors: Representatives Rude and Springer.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes the Washington State Charter School Commission to reassign and authorize a charter contract that has been surrendered, revoked, or not renewed by the Commission to an applicant that meets specified criteria.
- Exempts the reassigning and authorizing actions from provisions that prohibit the establishment of charter schools after April 3, 2021.
- Establishes a state maximum of 24 charter schools that may operate at any one time.

Hearing Date: 2/3/25

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

Charter Schools.

Washington's charter school system was established in 2013 after voter approval of Initiative Measure No. 1240. Charter schools are privately run public schools that operate according to the terms of renewable five-year charter contracts that establish the roles, powers, responsibilities, and performance expectations of the parties to the contracts. Charter schools are required by law to be tuition-free and open to all children, and may offer any program or course of study that any other public school may offer.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

While charter schools are subject to numerous statutory provisions governing their establishment, operation, and oversight, they are exempted from most statutory and rule-based requirements governing traditional public schools.

The five-year statutory period for establishing charter schools, with a maximum of 40 schools, concluded April 3, 2021. Prior to that, the establishment of a charter school could be authorized by the Washington State Charter School Commission or by a qualifying school district board of directors if the proposed school is within their district boundaries.

Washington currently has 17 charter schools with approximately 4,800 enrolled students.

The Washington State Charter School Commission.

The 11-member Washington State Charter School Commission consists of appointed and non-appointed members and is charged with assisting in the establishment and oversight of charter schools.

Summary of Bill:

The Washington State Charter School Commission (Commission) may reassign and authorize a charter contract that has been surrendered, revoked, or not renewed. An applicant for a reassigned charter contract is subject to existing provisions governing charter school applications, and the Commission is subject to existing provisions governing application reviews and determinations of their approval.

The reassignment and authorization of a charter contract is not subject to provisions that concluded the statutory period for establishing charter schools on April 3, 2021.

The maximum number of charter schools that may operate at any one time is established as 24.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 31, 2025.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.