



**CER POSITION ON NC CHARTER LAW AMMENDMENT (SB 337)**  
***Don't Weaken the Bill - Preserve What is Good and Build On it***

North Carolina rightly prides itself on creating more and better school choices for students and their parents. Yet, while SB337 – a proposed bill amending the state's charter school law – contains many positive provisions, it also contains unfortunate language forbidding the University of North Carolina (UNC) System from being a charter school authorizer.

In other states with strong, multiple chartering authorities, including university systems, have often proven to be catalysts for significant growth in the number of charter schools overall and in the number of schools demonstrating exceptional growth in student performance. North Carolina should avoid taking a step backwards in the fight for better schools, by removing provisions of SB337 that would weaken the law and adopting those provisions that make North Carolina a better place for charter schools to grow and thrive.

**Charter Authorizing Issues**

- Alternative preliminary chartering entities – including the UNC System – must be preserved. Their elimination, rather than the better route of strengthening the independence of these alternative authorizers will fundamentally weaken the NC Charter Law. States that are leaders in the charter movement have active alternative chartering entities, often with universities included. **Recommendation: Keep current statutory language.**
- The State Board is granted excessive discretion to impose unlimited new requirements on charter schools beyond what is specified in the law. This should be rejected. **Recommendation: Keep current statutory language.**

**Other Areas of Debate**

- Charter schools are granted the right to appeal to county commissioners if a school district rejects their request to lease school buildings. This positive step provides an additional route for charter schools to secure facilities. **Recommendation: Adopt the proposed new statutory language.**
- Charter school local funding must be provided within 30 days by school districts and any delay accrues interest. **Recommendation: Adopt the proposed new statutory language, but delete provision requiring charters to pay interest on overpayments while the issue is being resolved.**
- Special funds of individual district schools will not be counted in determining the per pupil share owed to charter schools. This reduces charter school funding, increasing the funding inequity between traditional public schools and charter schools. **Recommendation: Keep current statutory language.**

## Conclusion

SB 337 includes some positive elements for existing charter schools, but it fundamentally weakens authorization of new charter schools. Provisions to eliminate alternative chartering entities must be rejected, and granting the State Board unlimited authority to impose additional requirements on charter schools is troubling. **In a time when many other states are strengthening their charter school laws to create more high-quality public school choices for students, the proposed bill as it currently reads will substantially weaken North Carolina's charter school law.**

## Additional Resources

### The Parent Power Index – North Carolina

<http://www.edreform.com/in-the-states/parent-power-index/states/nc/>

### *NC Bill to Change State Charter School Law, is “Step Backward”*

<http://www.edreform.com/2013/07/center-for-education-reform-leader-says-nc-337-bill-to-change-state-charter-school-law-is-step-backward/#sthash.DtIstoq3.dpuf>

### *The Essential Guide to Charter School Lawmaking: Model Legislation for States*

<http://www.edreform.com/2012/10/model-charter-school-legislation/>

### *Charter Authorizing: The Truth About State Commissions*

<http://www.edreform.com/2013/05/charter-school-authorizers-the-truth-about-state-commissions/>