
Education Committee

HB 1195

Brief Description: Extending the time frame for establishing charter schools.

Sponsors: Representatives Dolan, Walen, Springer, Sullivan, Callan, Stokesbary, Chapman, Dufault and Lovick.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extends the timeframe for establishing up to 40 total charter schools by five years to April 3, 2026.

Hearing Date: 1/29/21

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

Washington's charter school system was established by voters through Initiative Measure No. 1240 (Initiative 1240) in November 2012. In 2015, the state Supreme Court invalidated Initiative 1240 in its entirety. In 2016, the Legislature reenacted the state's charter school system, with charter schools created, governed, and funded separately from other public schools.

Charter schools are established as public schools that operate according to the terms of a charter contract that specifies the roles, powers, responsibilities, and performance expectations of the parties to the contract. Charter schools are tuition-free and open to all children, subject to enrollment capacity limitations. Charter schools are also subject to statutory provisions governing their establishment and operation, but they are exempted from most statutory and rule requirements governing common schools.

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.

Twelve charter schools are currently operating in Washington and seven new charter schools have been authorized to open during the next two years.

The 2016 legislation that reenacted the state's charter school system included numerous changes to the invalidated statutes. The invalidated statutes allowed up to 40 charter schools to be established during a five year period, but the 2016 legislation reset establishment timeline and allowed up to 40 charter schools to be established during the five year period that commenced on April 3, 2016 and is scheduled to conclude on April 3, 2021.

In addition to the total limit of 40 charter schools, the number of charter schools that can be established each year is also limited. No more than eight charter schools may be established in any year during the five-year period concluding April 3, 2021. However, if in any year fewer than eight charter schools are established, additional charter schools, equal in number to the difference between the number established in that year and eight, may be established in subsequent years during the five-year period.

Summary of Bill:

The timeframe for establishing up to 40 total charter schools is extended by five years to April 3, 2026. Provisions limiting the number of charter schools that may be established annually are updated to reflect the extended establishment period but are otherwise unchanged.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 25, 2021.

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