



**CONSENSUS QUESTIONS FOR
LWVAL CHARTER SCHOOLS STUDY 2011**

Charter schools basically have the following common characteristics (*Facts and Issues, p.2*):

1. They are public schools.
2. Their charter is issued by an agency specified by law.
3. Their funding comes in part from the school district in which they are located but they usually supplement these funds through grants, donations, and other fund-raising.
4. They have their own governing body.
5. They follow the same civil rights and health and safety requirements as other public schools.
6. They must be open to all students.
7. When applicants exceed available slots, a lottery system determines entry.
8. They are exempt from parts of the curriculum, personnel, and/or management regulations that apply to other public schools.

Instructions: Please circle your response(s) to the following questions:

1. Should Alabama authorize the establishment of charter schools?
 Yes Yes, with restrictions No Undecided

Whether you support or oppose charter schools, answer the following questions to reflect your preferences, in the event that charter schools are authorized in Alabama.

ORGANIZATION/REGULATION OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

2. Which agency/agencies should be responsible for granting/denying permission for petition for individual school charters?
 - a. Local School Board
 - b. Alabama State Board of Education
 - c. Both the local school board and the State Board
 - d. Other (Please Indicate): _____
 - e. No opinion

3. Should there be a limit on the number of charter schools within a specific school system?
 - a. Yes (Please explain.) _____
 - b. No (Please explain.) _____
 - c. No opinion

4. Should there be a limit on the size of charter schools within a specific school system?
- Yes (Please explain.) _____
 - No (Please explain.) _____
 - No opinion

5. Should charter schools be required to follow oversight guidelines?
- Yes, strong guidelines. Explain on back, if necessary.
 - Yes, following general guidelines but allowing for enough relaxation of many regulations (i.e, waivers such as teacher certification for some teachers) so that innovative teaching can occur
 - Other (Please indicate) _____
 - No opinion

6. Should the local school system be required to provide transportation to the charter school(s) for residents of that system?

Yes Yes, with some restrictions (Explain _____) No
 No opinion

7. Should the following entities be allowed to manage a charter school?
- The school should manage itself independently.
 - Yes No
 - Not for profit charter management organization (CMO)
 - Yes No
 - For-profit education management organizations (EMO)
 - Yes No
 - Other (Please indicate) _____
 - No opinion

LIMITATIONS ON TYPES OF SCHOOLS THAT CAN BE CHARTER SCHOOLS

8. Should the following be prohibited from forming a charter school? (circle all that you would prohibit)
- Home schools
 - Virtual (distance learning) schools
 - Religious schools
 - Private schools
 - For-profit entities
 - Other (Please specify) _____
 - No opinion

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING METHODOLOGY ISSUES

9. Should the Alabama Legislature legislate the kind(s) of specialty schools or curricula allowed for charter schools? (Circle one)

Yes Yes, with restrictions (Specify below) No No Opinion

Regardless of your response above, answer this next section, as if the Alabama Legislature would be considering legislation related to **specialty schools or curricula** in order to reflect your preferences. Circle all your choices and/or add any others you consider appropriate.

- a. Math, Science or Engineering
- b. Performing Arts
- c. Language (e.g., Foreign Language)
- d. Leadership
- e. Classical Education
- f. Internationalism or Multiculturalism
- g. Other (Please describe)

10. Should the Alabama Legislature legislate the kinds of specialized teaching models or methodologies? (Circle one)

Yes Yes, with restrictions (Specify below) No No Opinion

Regardless of your response above, answer this next section, as if the Alabama Legislature would be considering legislation related to **specialized teaching models or methodologies** in order to reflect your preferences. Circle all your choices and/or add any others you consider appropriate.

- a. Socratic or Inquiry-based teaching methods (an approach that entails asking questions more than telling answers)
- b. Trans-disciplinary (an approach that attempts to create deeper understanding by creating relevance across curricula and between disciplines).
- c. Montessori/Constructivist approaches (child-paced, hands-on learning)
- d. Other (Please describe)

CERTIFICATION OF TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND OTHER PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL

11. Certification of teachers, administrators, and other professional personnel by the Alabama State Department of Education should: (Circle one)

- a. Be required for all such personnel in charter schools
- b. Be required for some proportion of the professional personnel (Indicate proportion _____)
- c. Not be required if alternative recognized level of training can be documented
- d. Not be required at all for charter schools.
- e. No opinion

ACCOUNTABILITY

Which of the following types of accountability should charter schools be required to provide:

10. Fiscal accountability (circle one)

- a. Same financial disclosure as other public schools
- b. Open disclosure of sources of revenue other than state and local fiscal support
- c. Other (Please indicate)_____

11. Academic accountability (circle all you support)

- a. Establish detailed curricula and procedures for assessment throughout duration of the charter
- b. Submit students annually to the same testing regimes as other Alabama public schools, as determined by the Alabama State Board of Education
- c. Use alternative assessment measures, such as portfolio assessments or other more “authentic” instruments (Please describe.)_____
- d. No opinion.

12. Accountability information should be presented to the following entities: (circle all you support)

- a. Parents
- b. Community
- c. Local Board of Education
- d. Alabama State Board of Education
- e. Alabama legislature
- f. Other (Please indicate _____)
- g. No opinion

FINAL ISSUES

13. If the LWVAL membership reaches no consensus on whether charter schools should be authorized in Alabama (as asked in Question 1), do you believe Questions 2-14 can be used to identify potential consensus on key elements charter school legislation should contain?

- a. Yes, the LWVAL can potentially come to consensus on some or all of the issues listed in Questions 2-14
- b. No, consensus on any of the issues cannot be properly achieved if consensus has not been achieved (as asked in Question 1).
- c. Don't Know/No opinion

14. What do you consider the strengths or positive aspects of charter schools? Please list

15. What do you consider the weaknesses or negative aspects of charter schools? Please list