

# Public Charter Schools of New Mexico

2022 Legislative Platform

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# Agenda

- Charter Schools Basics
- Legislative Platform:
  1. Charter School Facilities
  2. More Caring Adults in Schools
  3. Competitive Teacher Salaries
  4. Equalized First Year Transportation Funding
  5. New Data System for PED
  6. Diplomas for Adults
  7. Return to work provisions
  8. Equity in At Risk
  9. Opposition to restrict charter school development and enrollment

# Charter School Basics

- Charter schools have been a part of New Mexico's public school system since 1993
- There are 99 charter schools in the state
- Over 29,000 students attend charter schools
  - About the same as Las Cruces Public Schools
  - Median charter school population is ~225 students.

# Charter School Basics

In New Mexico, charter schools are:

- Free public schools that are free to any student that chooses to attend
  - New Mexico state law explicitly prohibits private, for-profit charter schools
- Governed independently, with high accountability provided by authorizers (the PEC or school district)
- Committed, through a public contract with their authorizer, to specific academic, financial and organizational performance
- Funded the same way as traditional district schools
- Use mission-driven educational methods to meet the needs of the learners that are unique to their community

# Charter School Basics

- Charter Schools Participate in the grand bargain of enhanced autonomy and accountability
- *Autonomy:* Charter schools have the ability to choose their own calendar and length of day, staffing patterns, subject areas, textbooks, teacher evaluation and school principal duties.
- *Accountability:* Charter schools are held accountable for their performance, which is rooted in the contract they sign with their authorizer. A charter must meet or approach their goals or risk closure.
  - Since 2015, 12 charter schools have been closed by their authorizer

# Charter School Basics

- Charter schools have blazed a trail for what is possible in New Mexico education
- New Mexico charter schools offered the first comprehensive, school-based programming for:
  - Performing Arts
  - Project-based learning
  - STEM
  - Blended learning
  - Early college high schools
  - Virtual learning
  - International Baccalaureate
  - Incorporating New Mexican language and culture
  - College Prep

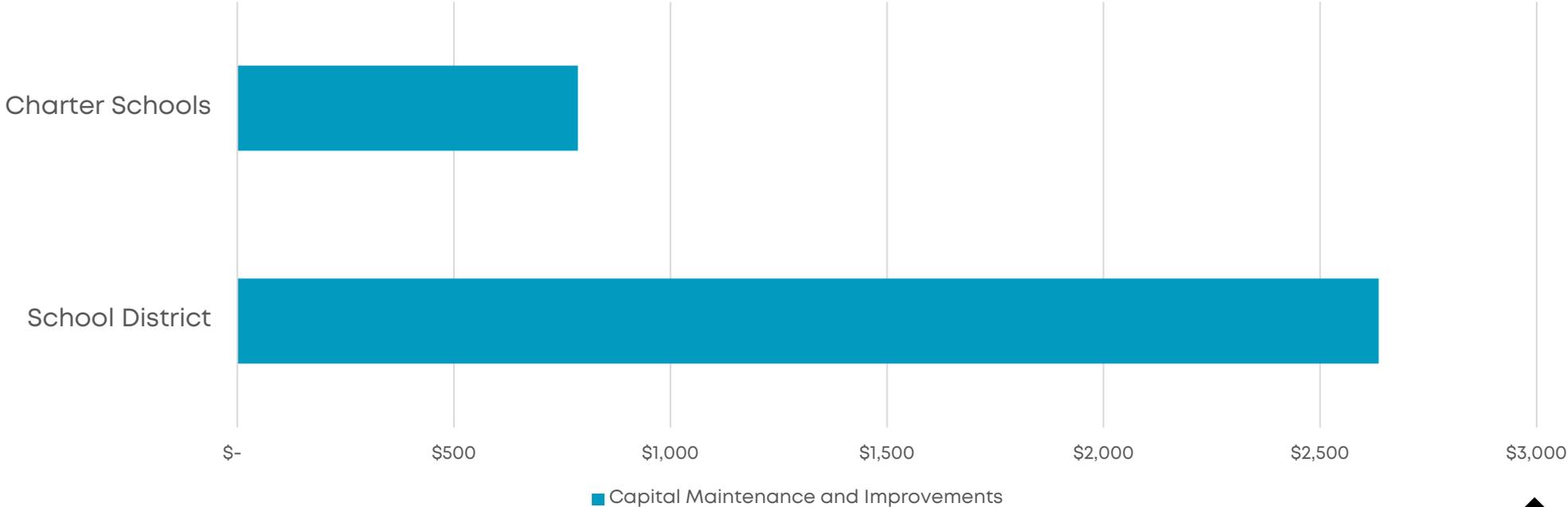
# #1 Charter School Facilities

- Charter schools are public entities without public financing for facilities
- Lease assistance is the only facility funding mechanism, which creates incentives not aligned with best interest of state funds
  - Lease Assistance only funds 80% of lease costs
- The foundation of facility funding is shaky:
  - Lease assistance has been subjected to changing policy to cut assistance by the Public School Capital Outlay Council
  - Some payment calculations don't include bathrooms or hallways
- There is no way to determine whether districts are offering available space to charter schools

# #1 Charter School Facilities

- School districts are receiving 3x more funding per student for facilities

**School Districts Receive More State Funding per Student for facilities than Charter Schools - 2018**



# #1 Charter School Facilities

Creates a set aside fund for the Public Project Revolving Fund for charter schools

- The fund won't impact credit rating on the Fund, but gives charter schools full benefits of it (low rates)

Public Land and Facilities will be offered to charter schools with enforcement on the law

Provide for Lease Assistance @ \$700 per student, with no square footage measurements

Eases the process by which charter schools join on mill levy questions within their school district.



# #2 More Caring Adults in Schools

Recent SEG increases have focused on fulfilling mandates

The burdens on educators have never been higher.

Charter schools have led the way in hiring non-traditional staff to spread the burden.

- ABQ Collegiate has an Operational Fellow. This bilingual staff member focuses on the daily logistics of school and acts as a parent liaison to relieve teachers
- Sidney Gutierrez has 4 full-time volunteers covering all duties from teachers outside of the classroom, giving them more time to plan/prep
- Solare – Full-time substitute allow all staff double preps, making the job of each teacher more sustainable.



# #3 Competitive Teacher Salaries

Work is changing and teaching is hard. Significant teacher salary increases are needed to keep it an attractive career.

- Bus Driver postings for \$17/hr - \$35,360 annualized
- Amazon Warehouse positions up to \$25/hr - \$52,000 annualized

We are supportive of the highest proposal that has enough funding in it to cover the **full cost** of teacher salary increases.

- ERB employer contributions
- Retiree Healthcare
- Employer portion of payroll tax/FICA (social security and medicare)



# #4 Transportation Costs

Charter schools are not covered for first year transportation costs and must pay out of operational for the first year of transportation.

This greatly hinders access to public charter schools, and the state should pay for the first year of transportation costs.



# #5 New PED Data System

STARS is old and the source of great burden in the education system.

The archaic system has caused PED to create dozens of additional reporting mechanisms (SOAPS, DASH, etc.), increasing the reporting burden on LEAs.

*“...it may be possible for local reporting costs in New Mexico to be reduced by up to two thirds if the state further modernized and coordinated data collection and validation.”*

- Martin Consulting Group in 2016 report



## #6 Adult Diplomas

In the 2019 legislative session, a firm age cap was put into law that didn't allow for any student aged 22 or older to enroll in public education

Allow students that enroll before their 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday to continue their education past the age cap if they continuously enroll.

## #7 Return to Work Provisions to Increase Classroom Talent Pool

A shorter “cool-down period” for retirees would increase the number of people schools can hire during this critical teacher shortage.



## **#8 Equity in At-Risk Funding**

Charter schools do not generate their own at-risk index, but take their district index number instead. This means charter schools serving our most disadvantaged students don't get the funding they need to serve them appropriately.

## **#9 We oppose restrictions in charter development or enrollment**

