



## 2023 Policy Platform

Public Charter Schools of New Mexico (PCSNM) has a two-pronged mission to support and advocate for New Mexico's charter schools. Public charter schools in New Mexico have a history of using their autonomy to accelerate student achievement and reimagine public education. The mission-centric education provided by our schools appeals to families and students across the state. Public charter schools are still the only way parents and students can fully engage in Montessori, project-based and performing arts education in a public setting. For many places they represent the best option for families to get a quality education.

Public charter schools have unprecedented public support in New Mexico. In a recent poll of New Mexico residents, 74% said they believe public charter schools help improve public education in our state; 76% of respondents said they supported the continued development of more public charter schools in the state; and 82% agreed that parents need more free public school choices in their community. Families and students know that public charter schools provide needed options for and

To best meet the needs of our students and families, Public Charter Schools of New Mexico presents the following legislative platform for 2022:

**We support funding parity for public school students regardless of which school they choose.** While charter schools in New Mexico are largely funded in the same way as all public schools, they also have limited access to funding that decreases accessibility and prohibits schools from providing expanded services. This includes First year transportation funding, fully funding programmatic units in the public school funding formula, ensuring charter schools receive federal funds for their students, and gaining the same access to emergency funding that traditional public schools have.

**We support legislation that funds student support staff for the general student population, not just special education.** The role that schools play in supporting students has expanded significantly over the last 20 years. As a result, more support staff for students such as social workers, counselors, therapists, nurses, librarians, career counselors and other support providers are needed to appropriately meet the needs of students. However, schools are not seeing additional funding come through the funding formula to pay for these critical service providers. The state should be incentivizing the hiring of such staff.



**We support incentives to add additional hours to school calendars and compensate for the already-expanded calendars charter schools have historically provided with no additional funding.** While school calendars are and should remain a local decision, providing incentives for all schools to add hours that make a difference for kids is an appropriate path for the state to address the longstanding lack of services to students. By mandating extending calendars, we fail to consider schools that get the job done with our students on a standard calendar. Further, many charter schools have provided extended school hours under standard funding with no ability to gain access to additional funding to appropriately fund them. This must be addressed in providing incentives for expanded school calendars.

**On budget considerations, we support local control over budgets, ensuring salary and benefit increases are fully funded.** Charter schools rely on local control to execute their missions and will seek pathways forward that preserve autonomy for all public schools across New Mexico.

**We support pathways for adults to continue their schooling toward a high school diploma.** When the state put a hard age cap on enrollment in public schools, they also put a hard stop to students working towards earning their diploma when they turn 22. We propose that schools that continuously enroll students past their 21st birthday continue to receive funding to educate those students until they graduate.

**We support legislation to ensure all charter schools are able to provide transportation for students.** For some charter schools in rural communities, there are no viable contractors to provide to-and-from transportation outside of the school district. We need to ensure that charter schools have an option to provide transportation to students.

**We support establishing a new data system at PED that cuts administrative burden for New Mexico public schools.** Charter schools, along with small school districts, are sensitive to administrative burdens from state reporting. PED's data pilot was designed to reduce administrative burden by streamlining data submission. We want this project to progress and support additional funding for this important project.

**We support funding equity in at-risk funding. We support an investigation into solutions that allow the at-risk index to fairly distribute units to schools with higher proportions of at-risk students.** The results of the Yazzie/Martinez lawsuit give this long-time charter school issue new urgency. We are interested new proposals which may alleviate the problems with the current application of the at-risk index to charter schools. An investigation of the factors included in the at-risk index may also be necessary.