



2024 Legislative 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 poll of New Mexico residents from this Fall, 77% said they believe public charter schools help improve public education in our state and 75% of respondents said they supported the continued development of more public charter schools in the state. New Mexico families and students know that public charter schools provide needed options to help them succeed in school. To best meet the needs of our students Public Charter Schools of New Mexico presents the following legislative platform.

Legislative Priorities

We support legislation that adjusts lease assistance policy to maximize charter school facility funds. Any policy should direct the Public School Capitol Outlay Council to provide funding annually and issue more funding for the charter school revolving loan fund. With these changes in place, lease assistance can go much further for schools and allow schools to leverage state financing via NM Finance Authority.

We support legislation that specifically allows authorizers to reduce the amount of SEG they withhold from charter schools and provides more transparency for how those funds are spent. Across the state, charter schools only receive 98% of their allocated operational funding. 2% of charter school SEG goes to a charter school's authorizer. This policy would allow authorizers to withhold less than 2%. Last year's iteration of this bill was passed unanimously by both chambers, but was pocket vetoed by the Governor.

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 many students working towards earning their diploma when they turn 22. We propose schools that continuously enroll students past their 21st birthday continue to receive funding to educate those students until they graduate.



Budget Priorities

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 adjustments to the funding formula that equalize and reinstate small school size adjustment for charter schools. Charter schools were targeted when small school funding was changed in the 2019 legislative session. Re-examining this formula and creating a supportive size adjustment for all schools is critical and we look to engage in this broader conversation for the 2025 session.

We support local control over budgets and calendars. 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. This includes discontinuing the budget language that restricts some schools from having full autonomy on their school calendars.

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 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 in 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.



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 budget and legislative priorities that reduced administrative burden and guide the Public Education Department to streamline administrative duties, and differentiate based on the needs. This includes supporting investments in new data systems that streamline administrative burden, ensuring mandates are put on only the necessary schools, and considering performance and charter status in new administrative mandates.