

Charter School Presentation to the LESC

New Mexico Coalition for Charter Schools

December 18, 2014

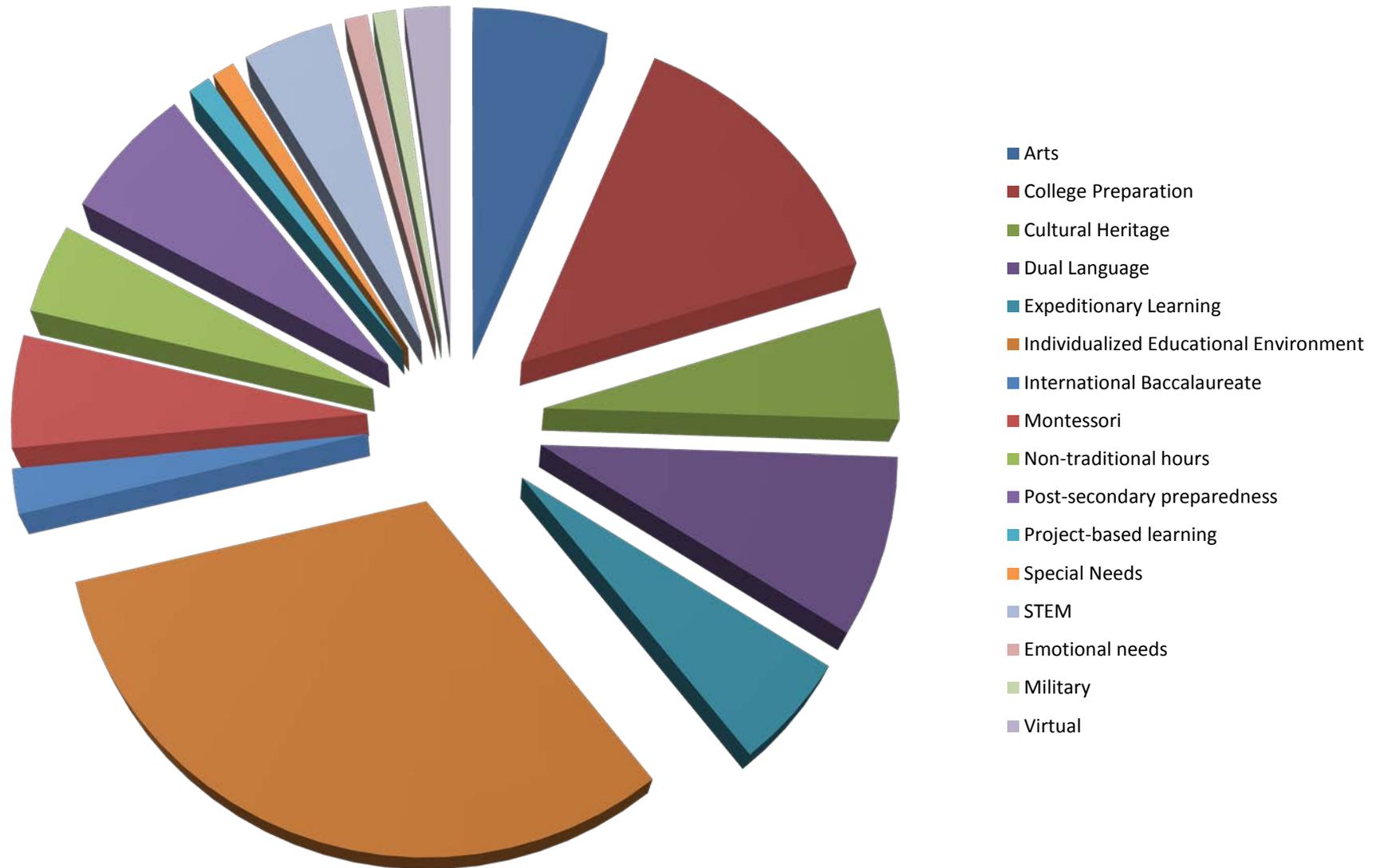
The Four Parts of Today's Presentation

- Explain the variety of student needs charter schools meet
- Address three prevailing criticisms of charter schools
- Explore possible consequences of funding legislation being considered
- Provide legislation and NMCCS recommendations to the LESC

Charters Provide Learning Choices for Students

- **22-8B-3. Purpose.**
- The Charter Schools Act is enacted to enable individual schools to structure their educational curriculum to encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods that are based on reliable research and effective practices or have been replicated successfully in schools with diverse characteristics; to allow the development of different and innovative forms of measuring student learning and achievement; to address the needs of all students, **including those determined to be at risk**; to create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site; **to improve student achievement; to provide parents and students with an educational alternative to create new, innovative and more flexible ways of educating children within the public school system**; to encourage parental and community involvement in the public school system; to develop and use site-based budgeting; and to hold charter schools accountable for meeting the department's educational standards and fiscal requirements.

94 Charters Offer Many Choices



Five Charter Schools' Missions: Examples of Charter Uniqueness

- **Tierra Encantada:** empower students as citizen scholars within a dual language environment through a rigorous learning curriculum, which will prepare students for post-secondary success.
- **Media Arts Collaborative Charter School (MACCS):** offers secondary students a comprehensive, project-based, cross-curricular education centered in the media arts. We prepare our graduates for positions in the media industries and for the rigor of post-secondary education.
- **Alma d'Arte:** graduate artists and scholars prepared for post secondary education and successful living in a global community.
- **Cottonwood Classical:** develop highly-skilled, socially-responsible learning activists who can analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information and take responsibility for their own learning. Cottonwood Classical promotes intercultural understanding in an all-inclusive learning environment and our graduates will be prepared to enter and thrive at any of the world's accredited colleges and universities becoming driving forces in their local, regional, national, and global communities. Students will be well-versed in communicating through reading, speaking, writing, and listening with diverse audiences and will be able to transfer skills and knowledge into a post-secondary setting and the global marketplace.
- **Red River Valley Charter School:** provide every student the opportunity to develop academically, socially, and physically through quality learning experiences utilizing the Core Knowledge Curriculum.

Three Prevailing Criticisms of Charters

- With the exception of charters specifically designed to serve at risk populations, charters cherry pick their students and do not serve at risk populations.
- Charters do not outperform traditional public schools (TPS).
- Charters cost more money to fund than TPS and choose to remain small to receive extra funding.

Tierra Encantada Charter School – Santa Fe

	2009 - 10	2014-15
Number of students	109	271
Percent free and reduced lunch	80%	66%
Percent Special Education Population	35%	19%
Caucasian	10.1%	30.3%
Hispanic	88.4%	66%
African American		2.9%
Other	1.5%	.9%

Media Arts Collaborative Charter School - Albuquerque

	2009-2010	2014-2015
Number of Students	152	229
Free and Reduced Lunch	23%	51.70%
Special Education Population	9%	27%
Caucasian:	46.09%	44.07%
Hispanic:	39.57%	41.24%
African-American:	4.35%	5.08%
Asian/Pacific:	3.91%	2.82%
Native American:	6.09%	6.78%

Alma d'Arte – Las Cruces

	2010 - 11	2014-15
Number of students	153	199
Percent free and reduced lunch	33%	50%
Percent Special Education Population	16-17%	22-25%
Percent ethnicity of students	70% +	70% +

Cottonwood Classical Preparatory - Albuquerque

	2010 - 11	2014 - 15
Number of students	125	660
Percent free and reduced lunch	<5%	≈14%
Percent Special Education Population	<1%	4.5%
Caucasian:	70%	39%
Hispanic:	24%	48%
African American:		5%
Asian/Pacific:	3%	5%
Native American:	3%	3%
Percent of English Language Learner (ELL)	>5%	23%

Red River Valley Charter School

	2010-2011	2014-2015
Number of Students	59	90
Free and Reduced Lunch	12%	69%
Special Education Population	15%	19%
Caucasian:	61%	46%
Hispanic:	37%	54%
Native American:	2%	

Final School Grades Analysis – Charter & Traditional Public Schools (TPS)

Final Grades	2012		2013	
	Charter	TPS	Charter	TPS
A and B Scores combined	36%	28%	52%	35%
C Scores	23%	34%	29%	27%
D and F Scores combined	41%	38%	19%	38%

Growth of Q1 Students – Charter & Traditional Public Schools (TPS)

Q1 Students	2012		2013	
	Charter	TPS	Charter	TPS
A and B Scores combined	41%	15%	59%	21%
C Scores	25%	21%	1%	3%
D and F Scores combined	34%	64%	40%	77%

Growth of Q3 Students – Charter & Traditional Public Schools (TPS)

Q3 Students	2012		2013	
	Charter	TPS	Charter	TPS
A and B Scores combined	35%	29%	79%	50%
C Scores	29%	28%	7%	18%
D and F Scores combined	36%	34%	14%	32%

What Small School Funding Pays For

- **Alma d'Arte:** \$608,609 – 35% of SEG
 - Staffing to bring average class size to 15
 - Three levels of visual arts, a wide variety of performing arts, culinary arts, new media art program
- **Media Arts:** \$610,258 – 36% of SEG
 - Behavior and mental health support
 - Media Coordinator
 - Community Outreach Media Productions
 - Media Classes
- **Tierra Encantada:** \$605,001 – 27% of SEG
 - Highly qualified Dual language teachers
 - Professional Development in our mission
 - Stipends for Dual Language teachers
- **Red River:** \$171,332 – 26% of SEG
 - Therapists and ancillary Special Education
 - Response to Intervention programs – Tier 2

Small School Funding: The Data

	MEM	Small School Size Adjustment	Total SEG	Percent of Size Adjustment to SEG	Average SEG per MEM
Statewide Total	330,635	\$80,722,366	\$2,348,192,754	3.44%	\$7,102
94 Charters	20,593	\$28,186,457	\$167,178,571	16.86%	\$8,118
51 TPS Districts with fewer than 1000 students	16,865	\$34,547,392	\$157,894,789	21.88%	\$9,362
TPS Districts with greater than 1000 students	293,177	\$17,988,517	\$2,023,119,394	.88%	\$6,901

Transportation Funding for State Charter Schools

- Cottonwood Classical
 - We transport over 525 students on 8 full buses throughout Albuquerque.
 - Parents and the school see buses as a safer alternative than students driving their cars to school.
- Red River Valley Charter School
 - We transport 59% of our students
 - Other students are parent or town transported
 - This year we did not receive enough funding to cover the full costs of the transportation and have had to raise an additional \$10,000.

The Possible Consequences of Recent Legislative Funding Considerations

- Removing small school funding:
 - Entirely would close 54% of current charters (51) in two years (schools that receive >20% of total funding from small school funding)
 - A defined percentage each year would erode charter quality which could lead to closure because the funding pays for the following:
 - Services of a district office such as a business manager, Special Education Director, counselor, office manager, etc.
 - Charter specific services such as arts, dual language, IB, college counselor
- Removing transportation funding for state charters:
 - Would harm schools that have built mission-specific communities and
 - Would decrease diversity in these schools

Conclusions from Data about Criticisms – Cherry-Picking

- The prevailing criticisms tell us that with the exception of charters designed for at risk students, charters cherry-pick students.
- The data tell us that rather than cherry-picking their students,
 - Many charters serve an increasing at risk population the longer they are open.
 - In addition, the lottery does not allow schools to cherry-pick students.

Conclusions from Data about Criticisms – School Performance

- The prevailing criticisms tell us charters do not outperform traditional public schools.
- The data tell us that
 - charters outperform traditional public schools.
 - A two year comparison of school grades as well as Q1 and Q3 growth shows that charters receive a much greater percentage of As and Bs than traditional public schools.

Conclusions from Data about Criticisms - Funding

- The prevailing criticisms tell us that charters receive more funding than traditional public schools.
- The data tell us that
 - charters receive about \$1,250 less per MEM than district schools with fewer than 1000 students.
 - In addition, district schools with greater than 1,000 students receive about 64% of the total small school funding charters can only receive for student populations fewer than 400 students.

Policies – Funding Recommendations

- That there be no small school funding decrease in fiscal year 2015-16.
- That, if there must be a decrease, there be a small school funding decrease which begins in FY 2017 and decreases by 25% a year.
- That as the adjustment funds are decreased, the funds are transferred from the funding formula to the charter schools stimulus fund for the following:
 - Issues that arise from economies of scale for a small school
 - Charter School startup funds
 - Gap funding for facilities
 - New, innovative practices at charters
- That additional units are provided to all schools with longer school years (more than 200 instructional days).

Policy – Transportation Recommendation

- That there should be no policy change in this area. Instead, the PED should adjust their transportation formula to appropriately deliver transportation funds to charters.

NMCCS Facility Recommendations to the LESC

- In addition to the policy recommendation from specific charter criticisms, charters advocate for the following time-sensitive policy:
 - Charters not compliant with 22-8B-4.2(D) may delay the date to be in a public facility if they establish a PSFA-approved plan to be in compliance with the law by 2019.
- Charters also recommend a bill to improve facility options for charters that need it:
 - Charters who meet specified criteria, such as three consecutive grades of a C or better and have been re-chartered once, may apply for a special funding mechanism through the PSCOC for 100% down payments. The total down payment may not exceed 25% of the total project on lease to purchase or construction agreements.

NMCCS Charter Policy Improvement Recommendations

- Create an appointed independent charter governing board of experts who can authorize, bond for facilities, and advise on charter policy.
- Remove all caps for charter growth (repeal 22-8B-11).
- Allow for state charters to replicate throughout the state and remain one school for the purposes of funding if they have been reauthorized once and have at least three consecutive years of a “B” or above.

Recommended Studies with the LFC and LESC

- Contract with an independent body such as the Center for Education Policy Research (CEPR) to determine charter schools' impact on the New Mexico graduation rate.
- Perform a study that accounts for all school funding sources that explain the costs to educate a student in a charter versus a traditional public school.
- Create a charter study group with selected charter leaders, LESC and LFC to identify issues pertaining to charter school policy and current law.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to present to the LESC. We want to continue to be a part of policy discussions when they are happening.