PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS





### MISSION

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools is the leading national nonprofit organization committed to advancing the charter school movement. Our mission is to lead public education to unprecedented levels of academic achievement by fostering a strong

### VISION

Our vision is that every family can choose a well-funded, high-performing public school that delivers an excellent education for their children.

# LUES

### QUALITY

We expect the best work from each other and ourselves and won't settle for anything less.

### MOVEMENT LEADERSHIP

We seek to lead and serve the charter school movement by deeply understanding opportunities and challenges and anticipating and responding to the movement's needs.

### **DIVERSITY**

We model what we ask of the movement. Our team includes talented people from a variety of backgrounds, reflecting the diversity of charter schooling and our coalitions and partners.

### **RESULTS**

We make decisions based on evidence and judge our own work by whether it ultimately advances our mission.

### SENSE OF URGENCY

We are urgent in pursuit of growing the number of high-quality charter schools, recognizing that for any given family, there is no time to wait.

### COLLABORATION

We work in partnership with charter school leaders, other stakeholders, and each other to achieve our collective goals.



# A LETTER FROM NINA REES

The National Alliance is privileged to represent the 3.2 million students attending charter schools in America and their families, who value having a choice in public education. Making sure children have access to schools that will allow them to thrive and reach their full potential is a great responsibility. We cherish this work because we know we are making a difference.

This year our champions in Congress delivered a \$40 million increase in funding for the Charter Schools Program (CSP), bringing total funding to \$440 million. Approximately 60 percent of charter schools across America have relied on CSP funding to open their doors.

The National Alliance itself secured a \$2.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to launch the Charter School Facility Center, which will be devoted to overcoming the facilities challenges that are holding back the growth of great schools.

We also helped deliver important legal victories for charter school students. In Washington state, the Supreme Court—once and for all, we hope—affirmed that charter schools are constitutional, paving the way for that state's charter school movement to fully blossom. In Louisiana, the court determined that charter school students have a right to the same sources of funding as students in district schools. The courts are making clear what parents have known for years: Charter schools are public schools.

The success of our movement this year was made possible by the National Alliance's consistent advocacy. We have cultivated strong relationships among both Democrats and Republicans, ensuring that no matter which party is in charge on Capitol Hill or in state legislatures, charter schools have allies. We are particularly proud of our work to bring school

leaders of color to meet with legislators. These leaders demonstrate the diversity of our movement and make a powerful case for why charter schools are essential to giving all students access to a high-quality education.

Quality is central to everything we do. True school choice must give parents access to quality schools where students are safe, nurtured, and prepared for their best future. We've led the charge to improve the quality of virtual charter schools and rallied state partners across the country to put their own commitment to quality at the center of their work.

As a result of our efforts, and of the stories of millions of happy parents, students, teachers, and charter school alumni, the public is embracing charter schools. Political arguments sometimes cloud the reality of what our schools are delivering, but at the end of the day parents want what's best for their kids, and they know that charter schools put a brighter future within reach.

In the pages that follow, you'll find more details about our work on behalf of charter school families in 2018, and you'll hear from some of our allies. As demand for charter schools continues to surge, we have much more work to do to deliver for the millions of families that want and deserve access to high-quality charter schools. We are inspired by the families and educators we serve, and we will continue to ensure that their voices are heard.

Warmly,

Nina S. Rees / President and CEO

# National Alliance for Public Charter Schools 9

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Charter schools are public schools attended by more than 3.2 million students in 43 states. Parents choose charter schools for their children. There are no entrance requirements to attend a charter school. The only factors limiting enrollment in charter schools are lack of available space and resources.

Charter school operations are funded by state and local tax dollars, just as with other public schools. However, in most states, charter schools receive significantly less funding per pupil than district-run schools. Moreover, charter schools typically have limited access to funding for school facilities and therefore must use operational funding to pay for the acquisition and upkeep of school

Charter schools are located in all types of communities, though they are most often found in urban settings, where other schools have frequently failed to deliver a high-quality education. Charter schools serve a larger share of students of color and economically disadvantaged students than district schools do and a similar share of students with disabilities.

Numerous studies have shown that charter schools deliver outsized educational gains for students, particularly students of color from low-income backgrounds. In return for meeting high standards, charter schools have the freedom to use whatever school model, curricula, and school calendar works best for their students. This helps more families find the right school for their child. Many charter schools offer students more time in class and put an emphasis on preparing students for college and successful careers.

Public support for charter schools remains strong and crosses partisan political lines. Parents are especially supportive of charter schools, with surveys indicating that millions of additional students would attend charter schools if the schools could grow to meet this demand.

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools aims to strengthen public education by supporting a robust, growing, and high-quality charter school movement. The National Alliance is the leading national voice for the charter school movement, bringing together state-based charter support organizations that work directly with schools to help them thrive and grow. Together, we help charter schools meet the needs of today's students and advocate for policies that will help many more students gain access to a high-quality public education.



### **CHARTER SCHOOL FACTS**



3.2 **MILLION** 

charter school students

(6% of all public school students)



additional students would attend a charter school if one were available



7,038

charter schools in 2017-18

states with charter school laws

charter school opened in 1992











urban

surburban

rural

FEDERAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

# LEADING THE CHARGE IN WASHINGTON



National Alliance President and CEO Nina Rees testified before the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce about how charter schools promote opportunities for America's students.

The National Alliance is a powerful voice for the charter school movement in our nation's capital. We build alliances with leaders from both parties to ensure that charter schools and our students are always a priority for policymakers.

In 2018, our work paid off in a 10 percent increase in funding for the Charter Schools Program (CSP), the primary source of funding for new charter school creation, expansion, and replication. Total CSP funding will rise to a record level of \$440 million in 2019—an increase of 73 percent since 2012.

The National Alliance received a CSP grant in 2018 to develop the Charter School Facility Center, which will be the first entity solely dedicated to helping charter schools access better facilities at reasonable cost. Limited access to facilities is one of the most persistent barriers to the growth of the movement,

and the Charter School Facility Center will spur the development and dissemination of new ideas, best practices, and affordable solutions.

The National Alliance team is regularly on Capitol Hill, advocating with members of Congress and introducing them to charter school leaders from around the country. Our Charter School Leaders of Color initiative has been especially effective at helping members of Congress understand the diversity of our movement by giving them an opportunity to hear directly from educators who are changing the education landscape in underserved communities. During the Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference, the National Alliance joined several co-sponsors to honor eight African American leaders with the first annual #BringTheFunk Awards, which recognized bold educators and federal policymakers working to bring high-quality public-school opportunities to students.

We are inspired by the students, educators, and families we serve and honored to fight for them in Washington D.C. 2019 brings a new Congress and new opportunities to show leaders the life-changing work happening in charter schools across America. More progress to come!



Lagra Newman, the founder and head of school at Purpose Prep in Nashville, Tenn., speaks at our School Leaders of Color reception following a day on Capitol Hill.

### DELIVERING FEDERAL FUNDING FOR STATE PARTNERS

Terry Ryan / Bluum CEO

One of the key changes the National Alliance advocated for in the Every Student Succeeds Act, the federal law passed in 2015 to govern K-12 education policy, allowed for charter support organizations to apply for funding in the State Entities competition of the Charter Schools Program (CSP). In September 2018, Idaho's "Communities of Excellence" consortium became one of four non-state entity recipients of this program.

with national standards for best practices. We are not afraid to appropriate great ideas, models, talent, and concepts from other states. Idaho is well-positioned to leapfrog the national charter school movement for both applying nationally effective practices, as well as supporting novel innovations—especially in rural areas—that are nationally transferable. There is talent, energy, and opportunity to improve Idaho's public K-12



The National Alliance is a tremendous partner on Capitol Hill. Their work is making it possible for us to bring new charter school options to Idaho families.

The consortium, led by the state's charter support organization, Bluum, was awarded a \$17.1 million grant. Through this private-public partnership, the CSP grant promises to increase the number of quality charter school seats in Idaho by 8,200 students, especially for Idaho's most educationally disadvantaged and rural students through public charter school startup, replication, and expansion.

As the nation's fastest-growing state, Idaho will take all the help it can get to ensure we are improving school options for our families and children. Our efforts to launch, replicate, and expand charter schools are aligned system. With CSP funds, Idaho charter schools can help lead the nation's charter school sector—and we are grateful to have received the funds and be part of the program.

Over the next five years, the Idaho consortium expects to issue 19 grants of approximately \$800,000 each. These dollars are essential to helping new schools open in our state and allowing great schools to expand. Thanks to the National Alliance's constant advocacy for increased CSP funding, Idaho's public school students will have more and better learning options.

### PARTNERING FOR PROGRESS IN THE STATES

State laws affect charter schools' ability to open, grow, and thrive, and state policy environments differ dramatically. The National Alliance team works across the country with our partners in charter support organizations to improve policies and help individual schools and the charter school movement get better and stronger.

Our Model State Law establishes a benchmark against which states can measure themselves to determine if they are doing all they can to help charter schools succeed. Quality and accountability are essential components of the law, and we have worked with state partners to publicly affirm the Commitment to Quality—a statement laying out the actions our movement is taking to ensure that our schools attain the highest quality. Partners in 37 states have signed onto the statement, and we are working closely with seven states to establish new best practices that can guide charter school advocates and leaders everywhere.

Virtual charter schools have posed unique challenges to maintaining high quality, and the National Alliance has been at the forefront of efforts to shine a light on the quality of virtual charter schools and work with legislators to correct deficiencies without limiting choice. In 2018, we spent significant time working with leaders in Ohio to strengthen their laws around virtual schooling. We were pleased when Gov. John Kasich signed Senate Bill 216, which brings more transparency and accountability to full-time virtual charter schools. This legislation was a win for students and will greatly improve the charter school movement in Ohio.

Our work is built on lessons learned through more than 25 years of charter schooling. States that have recently passed charter school laws have the benefit of launching new charter school movements with a lot of learning and practice behind them. In 2018 we kicked off a new effort with leaders from Mississippi and Alabama, two states with new charter school laws. We brought together teams that set goals for the development of their charter school sectors and identified challenges that charter schools will have to respond to.

Three schools opened in Alabama and Mississippi this school year, including the first intentionally diverse public school in rural Alabama—and more schools are already on the drawing board for future years. By giving leaders on the ground access to resources, expertise, and funding, we are helping Alabama and Mississippi cultivate and grow a high-quality charter school movement from the start.





### **ENSURING A STRONG START FOR ALABAMA CHARTER SCHOOLS**

Dr. JJ Wedgeworth / University Charter School Head of School

University Charter School's (UCS) success in its founding year can be attributed to our successful partnerships and collaborations. UCS was established through an innovative partnership between the University of West Alabama and the surrounding community in fulfillment of its mission to "improve the region through education and outreach." Our partners, including the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, helped us build relationships within the education and philanthropic communities.

The National Alliance was instrumental in encouraging and supporting the charter school conversation in our community very early on and later interpreting the

law and its intent for implementation in Alabama while we were drafting an application. When we needed counsel, the National Alliance provided us with legal expertise. When we needed to make connections, the National Alliance hosted us at the National Charter Schools Conference and helped facilitate introductions.

As we navigate the waters of a new sector and determine what charter school accountability looks like in Alabama, the National Alliance continues to be a valuable resource and a committed partner.

From the moment we set out to realize our vision for University Charter School, the National Alliance has provided critical guidance, helping us to build relationships, prepare our application, and understand the legal landscape in which we're operating. Their support has been vital to our success.

### ADVOCATING WITH ALLIES IN THE COURTS

Charter schools have brought tremendous benefits to students for 25 years, yet they continue to face attacks from groups opposed to parental choice and educational innovation. To defend the charter school movement against these attacks and seize opportunities to advance the rights of our schools and students, the National Alliance established the Charter School Legal Action Fund. The Fund works with partners to identify key opportunities to intervene in legal battles, filing friend of the court briefs, and lending legal expertise to parties protecting charter school rights.

In Louisiana, after three years of litigation, the state Supreme Court ruled in favor of charter schools, not only affirming the funding mechanism in place for state-authorized schools but also approving the use of local district funding for these schools. The high court's decision reversed a previous ruling by an appellate court, reinforcing the importance of pursuing every legal avenue to protect and advance the rights of charter schools.

We hope that the decisions in Washington and Louisiana will send a signal to charter school opponents elsewhere

This was a major victory for 16,000 students who were caught in the middle of a long-standing political fight for more than three years and for all those who advocate for more education options for parents. The Supreme Court confirmed our position that districts do not and cannot hold a monopoly on public schools in our state. We are grateful for the financial support and legal expertise that the National Alliance's Charter School Legal Action Fund (LAF) provided. As a small nonprofit, we simply did not have the kind of resources to match those of our opponents. With the help of LAF, we were victorious.

Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools Executive Director Caroline Roemer

In 2018 alone, the Legal Action Fund was actively involved in 15 cases. While several cases produced important wins, two were especially significant.

In Washington state, the Supreme Court affirmed the constitutionality of both charter schools and the statewide charter school authorizer. The decision in El Centro de la Raza vs. Washington makes clear that charter schools are public schools and ensures that current and future charter school students will have access to a high-quality public education. We joined several partners in filing an amicus brief before the state Supreme Court, and we were delighted that the decision finally removes the uncertainty that had been hanging over Washington state's voter- and legislature-approved charter schools.

that frivolously claiming charter school students are not entitled to public-school funding is a failing strategy. However, we will remain vigilant in monitoring court cases with potential negative impacts. We will also intervene in cases that promise to promote charter school equity and autonomy for the benefit of our students.

In addition to leading the Charter School Legal Action Fund, the National Alliance convenes the Alliance of Public Charter School Attorneys (APCSA) multiple times each year. The APCSA allows legal professionals from throughout the movement and across the country to share expertise, monitor ongoing legal developments, and deepen their understanding of the legal arguments and issues that are affecting charter schools now or may affect them in the future. The organization is one more way the National Alliance helps the charter school movement deliver the highest-quality public education to a growing number of students.

### THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE HELPED MARK A MAJOR VICTORY FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES IN WASHINGTON STATE

Patrick D'Amelio / Washington State Charter Schools Association CEO

On October 25, 2018, after years of legal challenges, the Washington Supreme Court issued a landmark ruling, upholding the state's charter school law and marking a major victory for the students of Washington state.

The National Alliance's Legal Action Fund and the Alliance of Public Charter School Attorneys worked in close partnership with us at the Washington State Charter Schools Association, providing support and expertise every step of the way, including pulling together a coalition to write a powerful friend of the court brief on behalf of Washington's charter schools.

The ruling affirmed that our charter school law does not violate the state constitution and recognizes the superintendent's supervisory duty over all public schools, including charter schools. Moreover, the Court ruled that the Charter Schools Act does not

divert restricted state funds to charter schools—an accusation from our opponents—because it clearly draws only on a separate and legal funding source.

While the law was upheld, one provision, regarding collective bargaining, was severed from the law. The National Alliance will continue to provide strategic counsel and support as our lawyers and advocates analyze the potential impact of this while the sector continues to grow and thrive.

In Washington, this ruling gave 3,400 students and their families from across the state new hope by affirming that charter schools will continue to be a valuable part of Washington's public education system. This new hope is shared by advocates for high-quality charter schools who can now point to this ruling as a precedent for future legal challenges.



## 2018 NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOLS CONFERENCE

AUSTIN, TEXAS

### **SPEAKERS**

George P. Bush

Texas Land Commissioner

Sydney Chaffee

2017 National Teacher of the Year

Dr. Bernard Harris Jr.

CEO, National Math and Science Initiative

**Mike Marriner** 

Co-founder, Roadtrip Nation

Marc Sternberg

K-12 education program director, Walton Family Foundation

Maria Rocha

Teacher, KIPP Esperanza, San Antonio, Texas

Raven Osborne

Alumni and reading interventionist, 21st Century Charter School, Gary, Ind.

**Zion Kelly** 

Student, Thurgood Marshall Academy, Washington, D.C.

Student, Austin Achieve High School, Austin, Texas









Sydney Chaffee



George P. Bush

4,700

attendees

275

exhibitors

125

breakout sessions

55

sponsors



### BROAD PRIZE WINNER

**DSST PUBLIC SCHOOLS** 

Accepted by Bill Kurtz, CEO



Bill Kurtz, CEO of DSST Public Schools, stands to accept the 2018 Broad Prize for Public Charter Schools.



### 2018 CHARTER SCHOOL HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

Dr. Ana F. Ponce

Camino Nuevo Charter Academy

JoAnn Gama and Tom Torkelson

IDEA Public Schools

Maquita Alexander

Washington Yu Ying Public Charter School



**#BRINGTHEFUNK** 

CHARTER SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

Representative Emanuel Cleaver, Missouri (D)

Representative Dwight Evans, Pennsylvania (D)

Representative Hakeem Jeffries, New York (D)

Donald Hense, Friendship Charter Schools

Margaret Fortune, Fortune School

Tim King, Urban Prep Academies

Charlene Reid, Excellence Community Schools

Shantelle Wright, Achievement Prep

U.S. Rep. Hakeem Jeffries of New York accepts a 2018 #BringTheFunk award at a reception during the Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference.



NUAL REPORT

### 2018 CHAMPIONS FOR CHARTERS

### **FEDERAL**

Senator Chris Coons, Delaware (D)

Senator John Cornyn, Texas (R)



Senator Orrin Hatch, Utah (R) Lifetime Achievement Award



Representative Adriano Espaillat, New York (D)
Rising Champion for Charters Award

Representative Luke Messer, Indiana (R)

Representative Kyrsten Sinema, Arizona (D)

### STATE AND LOCAL

Governor Jerry Brown, California (D)

Governor Dannel Malloy, Connecticut (D)

Governor Susana Martinez, New Mexico (R)

Senator Steve Glazer, California (D)

Mayor Sam Liccardo, San Jose, California (D)

Assemblymember Blanca Rubio, California (D)

Assemblymember Shirley Weber, California (D)

Senator Owen Hill, Colorado (R)

Senator Angela Williams, Colorado (D)

Representative Brittany Pettersen, Colorado (D)

National Alliance Senior Director of Government Relations Ron Rice and President and CEO Nina Rees present U.S. Sen. John Cornyn of Texas with a Charter Champion award.



National Alliance Board Chair Paul Pastorek presents New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez with a Charter Champion award at Altura Preparatory School in southeast Albuquerque.

Representative Lang Sias, Colorado (R)

Senator Lori Den Hartog, Idaho (R)

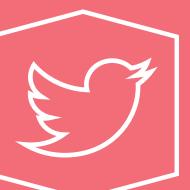
Senator Bob Nonini, Idaho (R)

Representative Judy Boyle, Idaho (R)



The 2018 Charter Champions from Colorado: Rep. Brittany Pettersen, Sen. Owen Hill, Sen. Angela Williams, and Rep. Lang Sias receive their awards.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**



22,531

TWITTER FOLLOWERS



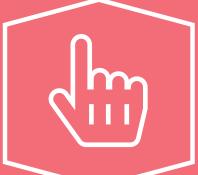
18,583

**FACEBOOK LIKES** 



5,000,000

SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS



2,841

**MEDIA HITS** 

**The New York Times** 

The Wall Street Journal

**The Washington Post** 

AP

**NBC Nightly News** 

**Forbes** 

**Politico** 

C-SPAN

**National Review** 

**The Chicago-Sun Times** 

Miami Herald

**Seattle Times** 

The Hispanic News

**Washington Examiner** 

The 74

Chalkbeat

**Education Next** 

**Education Dive** 



### **PUBLICATIONS**

- Measuring Up to the Model: A Ranking of State Public Charter School Laws, 2018
- Pensions Under Pressure: Charter Innovation in Teacher Retirement Benefits
- → Unionized Charter Schools, 2016-17
- Strengthening Federal Investment in Charter School Facilities
- > Estimated Public Charter School Enrollment, 2017-18
- National Charter School Management Overview, 2016-17
- Lessons Learned from Around the Country: Unified Enrollment
- Public Charter Schools and Native Students

### OF COURSE THERE CAN BE A GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOL IN EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD

# IONS FACTS



Bloomberg Philanthropies





Doris & Donald Fisher Fund

BILL & MELINDA GATES foundation Mike and Gillian Goodrich Foundation

John Katzman Kenneth Griffin Charitable Trust Hastings Education Fund



Fred A. Lennon Trust



Arthur Rock and Toni Rembe Rock











### **REVENUE**

Contributions	8,354,206
Government Subgrants	283,907
National Charter Schools Conference	3,247,926
Other Income	199,027
Total Revenue	12,085,066

### **EXPENSES**

Change in Net Assets	131,656
Total Expenses	11,953,410
State Advocacy	1,733,865
Research	1,069,816
Operations	1,606,917
National Charter Schools Conference	2,338,841
Legal Affairs	970,119
Federal Advocacy	1,595,739
Communications	2,638,113

Public 0

National Alliance for

# FINANCIALS

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**



Paul Pastorek
Board Chair
Former Louisiana State
Superintendent of Education



Andrew Broy
Chair, State Leaders Council
President, Illinois Network of
Charter Schools



Mary Landrieu Former United States Senator



Tom Torkelson
CEO and Founder,
IDEA Public Schools



Shirley Franklin
Vice Chair of the Board
Former Mayor of Atlanta



Moctesuma Esparza CEO, Maya Cinemas North America, Inc.



**Michael Murphy**Partner, Revolution
Agency



Gene Wade Founder & CEO, UniversityNow



Brian Jones
Treasurer of the Board
President, Strayer
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Bill Kurtz CEO, DSST Public Schools



**Ana Ponce**Executive Director, Great

Public Schools Now



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State Advocacy and Support



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**Jamison White** *Manager, Dashboard* 



**Kelsey Nelson** *Manager, Campaigns and Publications* 



Russ Simnick Senior Director, State Advocacy



Mark Medema

Managing Director, Charter

School Facility Center



Robert Reed Jr. Senior Director, Legal Affairs



**Kathryn Sullivan** *Director, Advocacy Communications* 



Renita Thukral Senior National Advisor for Legal Affairs



Ron Rice Jr.
Senior Director,
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Melinda Tolliver
Manager, Digital Media



**Christy Wolfe**Senior Policy Advisor



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