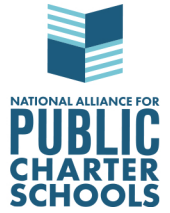


THE TIME IS NOW



2020 ANNUAL REPORT





“Our work has never been more important, and our commitment to expanding access to charter schools remains as strong as ever, even as we face political polarization and stretched budgets.”

**NINA REES
PRESIDENT & CEO**





TABLE OF CONTENTS

2	WHO WE ARE Our Mission, Vision, and Values	15	CLOSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE Understanding the Barriers to Equity in Digital Learning	25	2020 PUBLICATIONS
4	A PIVOTAL YEAR Letter From Our President & CEO	16	LOOKING WITHIN OUR MOVEMENT Serving Our Students During A Year Of Unrest	26	NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOLS CONFERENCE
6	WHAT WE DO 15 Years Leading The Movement	18	I AM CAMPAIGN Elevating Diverse Voices in the Charter School Movement	28	MAJOR SUPPORTERS & FINANCIALS
8	CHARTER SCHOOL FACTS Expanding Educational Opportunities to Millions of Families	20	OUR WORK ON CAPITOL HILL Protecting and Growing the Federal Charter Schools Program	29	BOARD OF DIRECTORS
10	WEATHERING THE STORM Navigating The COVID-19 Pandemic	22	THE CHARTER SCHOOL FACILITY CENTER	30	NATIONAL ALLIANCE STAFF
12	ABOVE AND BEYOND AWARDS Honoring Those Who Went To Extraordinary Lengths This Year	23	THE CHARTER SCHOOL LEGAL ACTION FUND	32	2021-2023 STRATEGIC PLAN
14	SCHOOL FUNDING IN THE AGE OF COVID-19 Fighting for Fair and Adequate Public Funding	24	SPREADING THE WORD		



OUR 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 charter school movement.

OUR VISION

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

A photograph of a woman and a young girl sitting at a desk, looking at a laptop screen. The woman is leaning over the girl, pointing at the screen. They are both looking intently at the laptop. The background shows a window with white curtains.

OUR VALUES

COLLABORATION

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

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.

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.

QUALITY

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

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.





A PIVOTAL YEAR

LETTER FROM NINA REES, PRESIDENT & CEO

While 2020 was a challenging year, it was also a year of inspiration and innovation for charter schools. Overnight, the COVID-19 pandemic changed the way schools operated, and our sector rose to the moment. The health and safety of students and teachers had to be prioritized in new ways, making remote learning the new normal. The existing gaps in access to digital tools and internet connectivity for students from underserved communities were exacerbated when school buildings were forced to immediately shut their doors. Charter schools met this challenge by providing Wi-Fi hotspots, laptops, and meals and by doing whatever was necessary to ensure students continued to learn and thrive.

Then, the very communities most affected by the pandemic suffered another heartbreaking blow. The death of George Floyd while he was in police custody was captured in video footage that shook the nation. Again, charter schools leaned in to support students and families who were traumatized.

The National Alliance used our voice to advocate. We joined with allies in calling for racial equity and also fought to ensure that charter schools were included in federal COVID-19 relief funds so they could continue their mission

even as emergency expenses rose and budgets were uncertain. We successfully defeated threats to reduce funding for the federal Charter Schools Program. And we worked with state partners to protect charter school autonomy and guide schools through uncertain policy and legal environments created by the pandemic.

As a new school year began, charter schools continued to innovate and adjust to the new environment and the emerging needs of students. They navigated the tricky decision of when and how to reopen safely, often pointing the way forward for other types of schools. As a result, we saw an upswell of interest in charter schools among parents, many of whom were thinking more deeply about what kind of school model works best for their child.

In November's elections, charter school parents and supporters turned out in droves, helping to elect candidates at all levels of government who appreciate the benefits charter schools bring to communities. We look forward to working with new and returning lawmakers to ensure the needs of charter school students are recognized and prioritized.

Our work has never been more important, and our commitment to expanding access to charter schools remains as strong as ever, even as we face political polarization and stretched budgets. In 2021, we will embark on a new strategic plan that will shape our efforts to create more high-quality charter schools. We will continue to be guided by the values underpinning the charter school movement—including educational equity, empowered teachers and leaders, and putting families and student first.

As I reflect on 2020, I can say that this year toughened us, and it brought out the best in our movement. I'm proud of what we accomplished together and eager for the work ahead.

NINA REES, PRESIDENT & CEO



15 INSPIRING YEARS OF PROGRESS

For 15 challenging and inspiring years, the National Alliance has served as an advocate and voice for the charter school movement, helping expand educational opportunities to millions of children and their families. Below are some of our biggest accomplishments to date:

The National Alliance first hosts the National Charter Schools Conference in Albuquerque

The National Alliance creates a new model law to assess the strength of charter school laws in each state, emphasizing quality, growth, and accountability

The National Alliance helps Washington become the 41st state to pass a charter school law

2005

The National Alliance is founded; more than 1 million students attend a charter school

The National Alliance establishes its State Leaders Council to make a stronger connection to schools through ongoing partnership with the leaders of state-based charter support organizations

2007

2008

Both presidential candidates in the general election support the growth of charter schools

The National Alliance launches the Alliance of Public Charter School Attorneys (APCSA) to serve as a research and networking hub for education attorneys on the legal issues affecting charter schools

2009

2011

The number of students attending charter schools surpasses 2 million

The National Alliance helps Maine become the 40th state to pass a charter school law

2012



The National Alliance launches its Charter School Legal Action Fund to strategically invest in nationally significant offensive and defensive litigation that have an impact on the existence or operation of charter schools

The National Alliance commissioned a national study of parents of school-age children that found that 30% of parents are interested in sending their child to a charter school and 78% support having a charter school open in their community

The National Alliance releases the first edition of the *Health of the Charter School Movement*

The Federal Charter Schools Program grows to \$440 million in funding

The National Alliance celebrates its 15th anniversary, and more than 3.3 million students attend charter schools

2014

2016

2018

2020

2013

2015

2017

2019

The National Alliance helps Mississippi become the 42nd state to pass a charter school law

The School Leaders of Color Program is created to help shine a light on the sector's diverse leadership and ensure federal support for the growth of the Charter Schools Program

The National Alliance helps Alabama become the 43rd state to pass a charter school law

The National Alliance launches the Charter Schools Action Fund, a 501(c)4 partner organization committed to advancing charter school policy nationwide

The National Alliance helps Kentucky become the 44th state to pass a charter school law

The Charter School Facility Center is founded

The National Alliance helps West Virginia become the 45th state to pass a charter school law

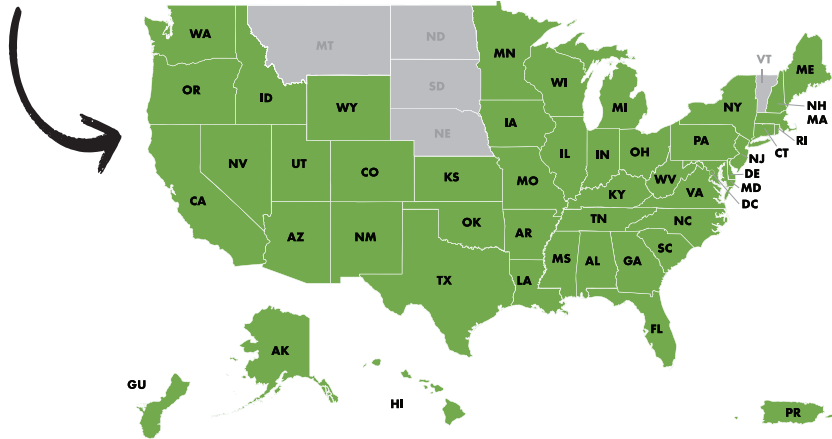


CHARTER SCHOOL FACTS

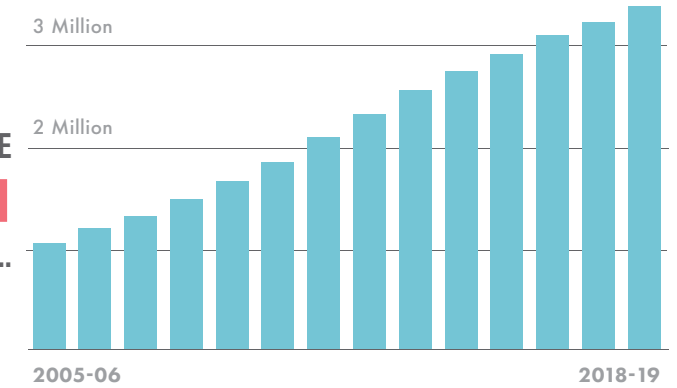
EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO MILLIONS OF FAMILIES

CHARTER SCHOOL LAWS IN

45 STATES
plus D.C., Guam, & Puerto Rico

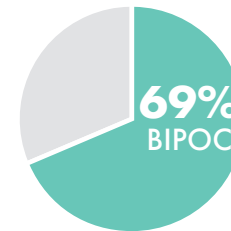


NUMBER OF CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS



CHARTER SCHOOLS SERVE
3.3 MILLION
STUDENTS AND COUNTING ...

STUDENTS OF COLOR
ACCOUNT FOR
NEARLY 70% OF ALL
CHARTER STUDENTS



... AND **MORE THAN 30 PERCENT**
OF CHARTER SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
ARE SCHOOL LEADERS OF COLOR,
COMPARED TO **21.5 PERCENT** IN
DISTRICT SCHOOLS



7,500
CHARTER SCHOOLS
& CAMPUSES

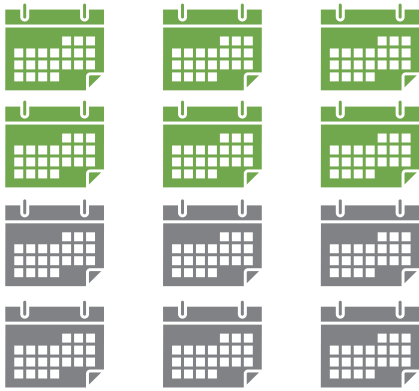
► 3X INCREASE SINCE 2005-06



219,000
CHARTER SCHOOLS
TEACHERS



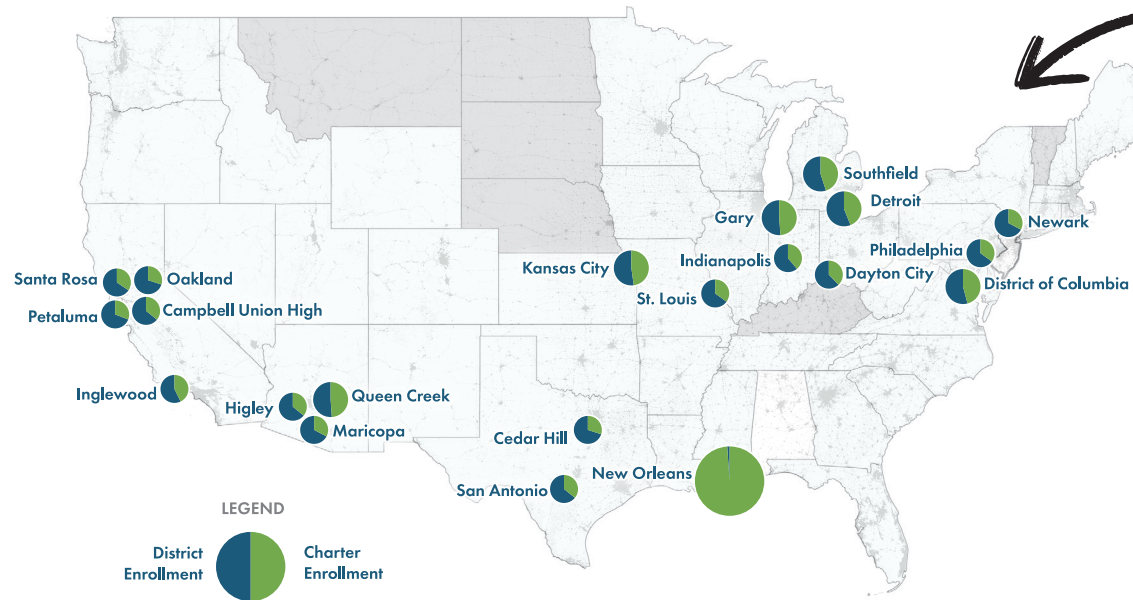
59%
OF CHARTER STUDENTS RECEIVE
FREE OR REDUCED PRICE LUNCH



BLACK CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS ARE SIX MONTHS AHEAD IN TERMS OF THEIR LEARNING GAINS VERSUS DISTRICT SCHOOL PEERS

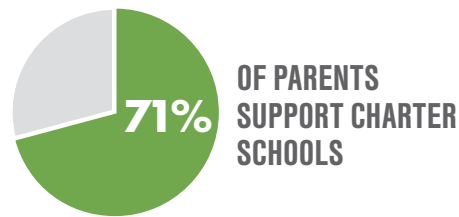
A Harvard study using National Assessment of Educational Progress data finds that eighth graders attending charter schools showed learning gains that are three months ahead of their district school peers from 2005 to 2017. Black students made particular progress and were an additional six months ahead.

AMERICA'S LARGEST CHARTER SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

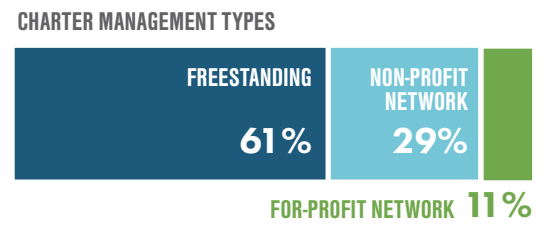


21 SCHOOL DISTRICTS WHERE OVER 30% OF PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS ATTEND A CHARTER SCHOOL

99% CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT SHARE IN NEW ORLEANS



3 OUT OF 5 CHARTER SCHOOLS ARE FREESTANDING, HOMEGROWN, SINGLE-SITE SCHOOLS



WHERE ARE CHARTER SCHOOLS LOCATED





WEATHERING THE STORM

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, the National Alliance immediately pivoted to ensure charter schools, our families, and our communities received the support and resources needed to weather the storm. We built a dedicated COVID-19 webpage to provide the most up-to-date information and resources for schools, educators, students, and parents. As the movement's leading policy advocacy organization, we worked diligently to ensure legislators and other key stakeholders were aware of charter schools' needs and understood the necessity of including them in pandemic-related relief legislation. To highlight the extent of the virus's impact, we built out a COVID-19 vulnerability map that displayed coronavirus infection rates for geographic areas where 10% or more of students attend charter schools. We also collaborated with Public Impact to produce a report demonstrating how charter schools maximized their flexibility to support their students.

As the pandemic raged on, schools across the nation grappled with how to safely reopen their doors. Health, safety, sanitation, and quality considerations all came into play when deciding how best to structure school reopening.

Beginning in April, the National Alliance formed a working group comprising state charter school leaders, legal advocates, and policy experts to produce *A Compendium of Public Resources on the Safe Reopening of Charter Schools*. In collaboration with

Kendall Massett is the executive director of the Delaware Charter Schools Network, a statewide nonprofit organization supporting 23 charter schools that provide independent, tuition-free public education to 16,086 students from kindergarten through 12th grade. She is also on the National Alliance Board of Directors.



charter school leaders, educators, and advocates from across the country, the National Alliance produced this guide to support efforts to safely reopen schools and stay connected with students, teachers, and other staff should COVID-19 force schools to close again. Our goal was to do the heavy lifting of reviewing current plans, reports, and media resources and then summarize the most relevant information in one document.

We also produced webinars that covered aspects of school reopening and dedicated an entire day of our national conference to the topic. Our webinars included information on how to address construction concerns, how to address special education concerns, and how school leaders should support staff, students, and families to ensure continuous instruction while prioritizing safety. And with school cleaning a core issue in the reopening process, we partnered with Grove Collaborative to facilitate a \$100,000 donation of cleaning and hand sanitizer products to public charter schools in ten communities nationwide.

At the onset of the pandemic the National Alliance's legal team held calls with its Alliance of Public Charter

"The National Alliance has stepped up and provided support in times of need. Their support enabled me to be able to provide more for Delaware's charters than I ever could on my own. Through this pandemic, the weekly calls and technical support provided by the National Alliance have been an incredible source of information and support."

**KENDALL MASSETT
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DELAWARE CHARTER SCHOOLS NETWORK**

School Attorneys (APCSA) community to surface and address emerging legal issues created by the COVID-19 pandemic. School reopening was a critical topic, as it was unclear what potential legal liability charter schools might face regarding health and safety issues during this unprecedented public health crisis.

To best support the field, the National Alliance:

- ▶ Hosted a Facebook Live session during the National Charter Schools Virtual Conference on COVID-19-related legal topics that largely focused on school reopening issues.
- ▶ Contributed analysis of legal issues to the working group that developed the school reopening guide.
- ▶ Helped school operators assess how the COVID pandemic might affect charter expansions and renewals.

As charter schools continue to grapple with crucial decisions on reopening and keeping their doors open, the National Alliance will serve as a national hub for providing technical support and promoting best practices.



2020 ABOVE AND BEYOND AWARDS

Unprecedented times called for a swift, comprehensive, and assertive response. The charter school community went above and beyond to serve students during the coronavirus pandemic. Inspired by the way schools stepped up, we honored 10 charter schools from across America with our first-ever Above and Beyond Awards during National Charter Schools Week, May 10-16. While all charter schools showed exemplary commitment to their students by rapidly transitioning to distance learning last spring, and most offered additional supports like meals and technology assistance, Above and Beyond schools went to remarkable lengths to meet the needs of not only their students, but the families of their students, and their larger communities in the face of the pandemic.

BAXTER ACADEMY FOR TECHNOLOGY & SCIENCE

PORTLAND, ME – An engineering teacher worked closely with students and alumni to help build a ventilator in less than three weeks after learning of the critical shortage facing hospitals.

COMMON GROUND HIGH SCHOOL

NEW HAVEN, CT – In partnership with local organizations, the school delivered free fresh produce directly to the doors of families in need.

DISCOVERY CHARTER SCHOOL

ROCHESTER, NY – The school building became a distribution center for academic supplies, community resources, food, and clothing for families in need.

DSST PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DENVER, CO – DSST launched a remote learning program, E-School, and ensured that all students were able to access their instruction with an innovative 100% internet access initiative.

HARMONY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

HOUSTON, TX – Harmony Public Charter Schools helped produce face shields using a 3D printer and medical supplies for local health-care workers and first responders on the front lines in the fight against COVID-19.

IMPACT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SEATTLE, WA – Impact Public Schools fundraised and built partnerships to provide their students with WiFi hotspots, laptops, and free meals—made available to any child free of charge, regardless of enrollment.

KIPP COLUMBUS

COLUMBUS, OH – KIPP Columbus distributed more than 100,000 free meals to children and opened a pandemic childcare center on campus, for children of essential workers.

PALMS WEST CHARTER SCHOOL

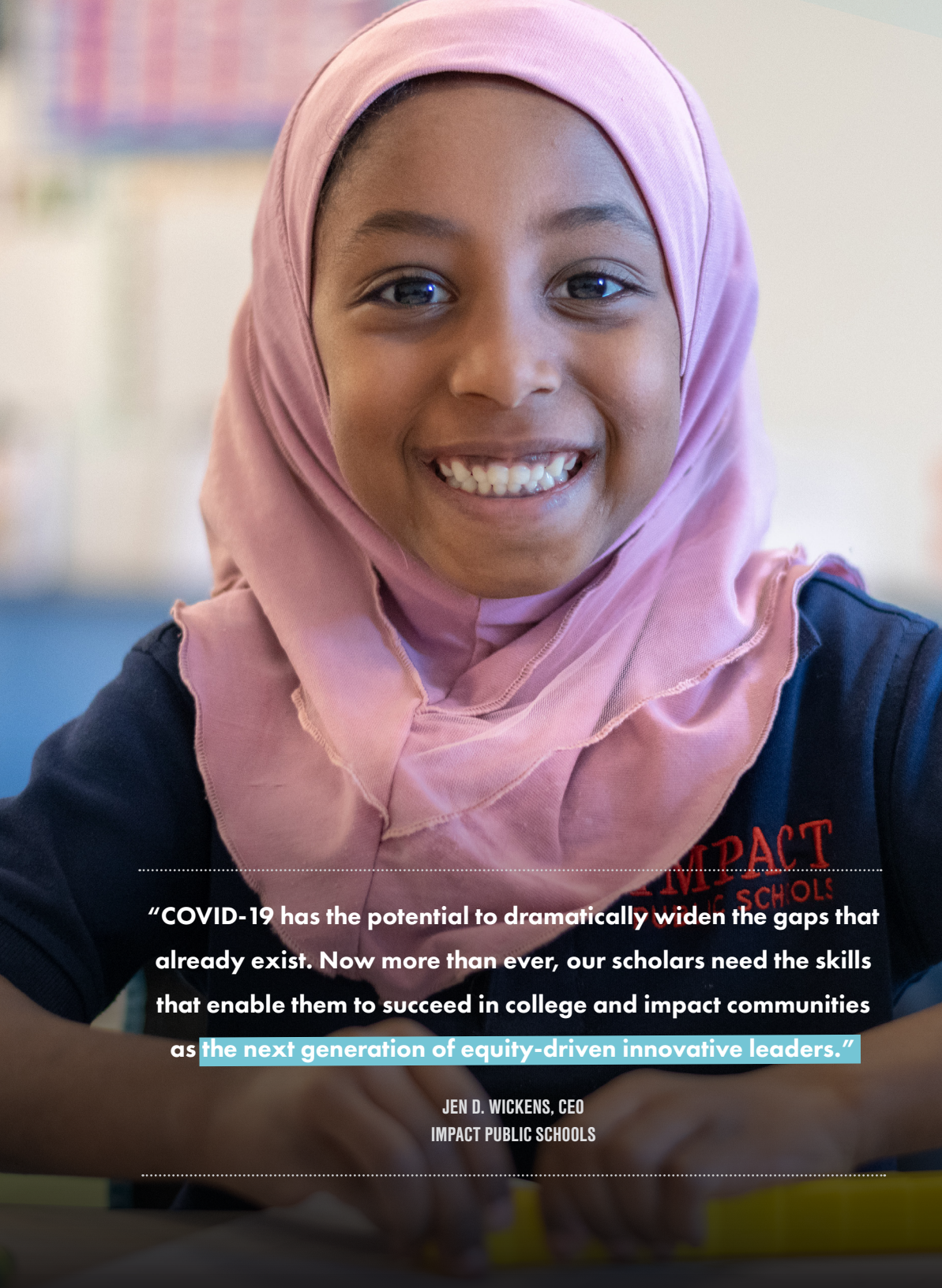
LOXAHATCHEE, FL – Students sent heartfelt letters of encouragement to residents at their local nursing home.

RAUL YZAGUIRRE SCHOOLS FOR SUCCESS

HOUSTON, TX – The school made sure that all children in their community had the opportunity to eat every day.

SPRING CHARTER SCHOOLS

RIVERSIDE COUNTY, CA – Spring Charter Schools built upon their online learning program, Venture Online, to open an online school free to anyone who signed up.



“COVID-19 has the potential to dramatically widen the gaps that already exist. Now more than ever, our scholars need the skills that enable them to succeed in college and impact communities as the next generation of equity-driven innovative leaders.”

JEN D. WICKENS, CEO
IMPACT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2020 ABOVE AND BEYOND AWARD IMPACT PUBLIC SCHOOLS SEATTLE, WASH.

Last spring, Impact Public Schools raised funds and built partnerships to provide their students with Wi-Fi hotspots, laptops, and free meals—and also made meals available to any child, regardless of enrollment. The school also quickly launched six week-at-home learning packets for students in kindergarten through second grade and launched a read-aloud video series—all of which were made available to anyone online. Then Impact created an award-winning early elementary distance learning model called Impact at Home. The Impact at Home model balances daily social emotional learning, asynchronous instruction, and project-based learning. The model has resulted in the scholars achieving 95% attendance and significant student academic growth. Impact is now sharing their model with other charter schools and districts throughout the state.



SCHOOL FUNDING IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

FIGHTING FOR FAIR AND ADEQUATE PUBLIC FUNDING IS ALWAYS A PRIORITY FOR THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE.

In 2020, we had to redouble our efforts, as the pandemic threatened charter school finances around the country. Charter schools are already at a disadvantage in funding, receiving, on average, just 70 cents in public funding for every dollar that district schools receive. Most charter schools are also responsible for paying for their own buildings.

As charter schools quickly adapted to the new reality forced on them by the pandemic, costs for everything from technology to cleaning supplies grew. At the same time, threatened cuts to state and local budgets from the economic downturn meant that charter schools would need to fight for every bit of funding to keep meeting their promises to students. Furthermore, the pandemic made it difficult for charter schools to do the fundraising typically required to close the funding gaps they face under normal circumstances for facility expenses.

Many charter schools needed emergency funding to cover rent, mortgages, utilities, and additional staffing costs. At the federal level, we worked with Congress to ensure charter schools were treated the same as other public schools in the distribution of relief funds,

and that charter schools were not singled out for closures or blocked from expanding because of budget constraints. We also asked Congress to prevent states and school districts from targeting charter schools with disproportionate funding cuts if state budgets get squeezed.

In April, the National Alliance clarified how and where the pandemic could have a financial impact on individual charter schools and the movement as a whole. *What Charter Schools Need to Know: Acting During the Impending Fiscal Downturn* presents data on external factors and best practices that schools and policymakers should consider during the budgeting process. We looked at three key themes: what we can learn from the Great Recession, state revenue and expense volatility and the impact on school budgets, and school-level budgeting. The brief gives charter schools information about fiscal indicators for their state that suggest where they may be most at risk, such as how many days of funding are in a state's rainy day fund and when cuts are likely to kick in.



CLOSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

As the pandemic redefined the American education system, at-home classrooms became the new norm, and laptops and home internet access became essential. Massive socioeconomic inequalities that already existed were exacerbated by the pandemic when students' access to the Internet and devices determined whether their learning would continue or be further interrupted. This digital divide widens the achievement gaps the charter school movement aims to close. We took the lead in assessing the problem and driving solutions.

To understand just how wide the technology gap is, we conducted detailed research and published *What Policymakers Need to Know: Closing the Digital Divide*. We shared this report widely with partner organizations, influential media outlets, and policymakers. The report, covered by CNN.com, found that charter school students are less likely to have proper connectivity or the devices needed to succeed in distance learning than their district school counterparts.

“We want to make sure students of color and students from low-income families are taken care of. They already faced steep challenges and now they have been most severely affected by the current crisis.”

NINA REES
CNN, JUNE 11, 2020

We urged legislators on Capitol Hill to address the digital divide. We shared our findings and supplied compelling stories of charter schools and families struggling to handle the rapid transition to at-home learning. We were pleased to see the problem addressed in the Heroes ACT, which passed the U.S. House of Representatives. Moving forward, we aim to continue publicizing the issue, both with policymakers and the media, until all students have reliable access to vital educational technology.



KEY CONCLUSIONS

- 1.** Approximately **9 million students** in the United States lack access to the internet or devices.
- 2.** More than **1 in 5 charter school students** are located in an area with low access to the internet.
- 3.** In 31 out of the 44 states with charter schools, **20% or more of charter school students** lack connectivity.
- 4.** The estimated cost to close the digital divide in charter schools is **\$243 million**.



LOOKING WITHIN OUR MOVEMENT

SERVING OUR STUDENTS DURING A YEAR OF UNREST



Education is the most reliably consistent route out of poverty, so it should come as no surprise that racial equity and educational access have long been intertwined in America. Many landmark civil rights laws like Plessy v. Ferguson or Brown v. The Board of Education had educational access at their core. When inequities in education are not addressed, they show up later as inequities in employment, economic prosperity, healthcare, housing, and criminal justice. Most of the children who are today denied access to a high-quality public education follow the same predictable racial and income patterns of those who have been denied equality since the country's founding. We in the charter school movement know this isn't right, and that's why we work so hard to challenge a system that continues to poorly serve far too many students.

The tragic death of George Floyd while in police custody ripped open deep racial wounds for many and revealed a persistent and shameful truth to many others. Some asked what it had to do with charter schools. Others asked why we would weigh in on this issue. And in response, we ask "How could we not?" Many of the students and families served by charter schools live in the very communities in which these tragedies occurred. As Americans across the nation petitioned lawmakers to curb police brutality and advance racial justice, we could not ignore the impact on many of the students and families we are privileged to

serve. The National Alliance will continue to leverage the weight of our movement to expand equity and justice.

Effectively serving a population that is nearly 70% students of color requires us to look within our movement and within ourselves to be sure we are not complicit in any

Effectively serving a population that is nearly 70% students of color requires us to look within our movement and within ourselves to be sure we are not complicit in any activities that harm these students.

activities that harm these students. We must commit to not helping build the school-to-prison pipeline, in part by paying more attention to the discipline policies in our schools. Furthermore, if we want a future generation ready to lead, we must do more to get all students prepared to go to college and ensure they are all able to make choices

for themselves that include pursuing fulfilling careers and taking leadership roles in society.

We also must attract a more diverse teacher and leader workforce—one that reflects the rich mosaic that is America. Charter school students are more likely than students in other schools to be taught by a teacher of color. But we still have a way to go, and we won't reach our goal until we show students how empowering a teaching career can be. We need to help our students see themselves as leaders, and that starts by giving them role models in the positions of authority they see every day—teachers and principals—so they can envision a future in which they grow up to lead and inspire others. It also requires giving teachers the pay, autonomy, support, and respect they need to flourish in their careers.

Over the past year, the National Alliance continued to make racial equity a major component of our work. We dedicated multiple sessions at our virtual conference to racial equity, both within the education space and broadly across the nation. Through our School Leaders of Color program, we have continued to lift up the voices of our leaders in the court of public opinion, in the halls of Congress, and before funders. We also issued public statements and rallied our base to support federal legislation aimed at condemning police brutality.



OUR SCHOOLS MATTER

Still from our "I Am" Campaign Ad



Charter school supporters are a diverse group. We are Black. We are Latino. We are youth advocates. We are suburban moms. We are Democrats, Republicans, and independents. Some of us are union members. The one thing we all have in common is that we support charter schools. We will not let other people define us, ignore us, or mischaracterize our work.

Leading up to the 2020 elections, the National Alliance launched the “I am” campaign to demonstrate that charter school voters are a diverse group of individuals whose votes matter. We encouraged individuals across the nation to show their support through statements such as “I am the future,” “I am Black,” and “I am a suburban mom.” We also recruited school leaders and staff from state charter support organizations to serve as campaign captains and spokespersons in key media markets around the country: Atlanta, Charlotte, Cleveland, Denver, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Memphis, Miami, Milwaukee, New York City, Phoenix,

Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. These school leaders were featured in nearly 30 media placements on prominent platforms, including ABC’s “Good Morning America,” to tell their stories about how charter schools best serve their communities.

Voting is a crucial part of not just maintaining our democracy but also of making sure voices of the charter school movement are heard. It is the most valuable tool we have for ensuring that influential decision-makers understand the diversity, strength, and size of the movement. With that in mind, we partnered with When We All Vote, a national voter registration and awareness organization co-founded by Michelle Obama, to create a hub for charter school supporters. The online platform presented various resources, including voting deadlines, volunteer opportunities, events, and other avenues to empower individuals to take action and be a part of American democracy.

FACT: The “I AM” Campaign received 1,021 mentions and more than 4 million impressions in the lead up to the 2020 elections.



Images shared using our “I Am” Instagram and Facebook Filters



OUR WORK ON CAPITOL HILL

Each year, a top priority for the National Alliance is to protect and grow the federal Charter Schools Program (CSP), which is vital to expanding access to high-quality charter schools across America. In 2020, the CSP faced challenges from charter school opponents in Congress, and the potential that an anti-charter school presidential candidate could win in November.

We redoubled our efforts to show the depth and diversity of support for the CSP and charter schools. For the fifth consecutive year, charter school leaders of color came to Capitol Hill to advocate for the CSP and explain to members of Congress how charter schools are powerful proponents of change and progress in their communities. We also secured a record number of congressional signatures on letters supporting the CSP in the appropriations process.

We harnessed our research expertise to defend the CSP by publishing our *2020 CSP Annual Report*, which details the impact of the program and highlights recent grantees.

We also coordinated with Bellwether Education Partners to produce *Clearing the Air: An Analysis of the Federal Charter Schools Program*, as well as a companion toolkit aimed at helping state leaders better tell the story of how the CSP has impacted students in their state.

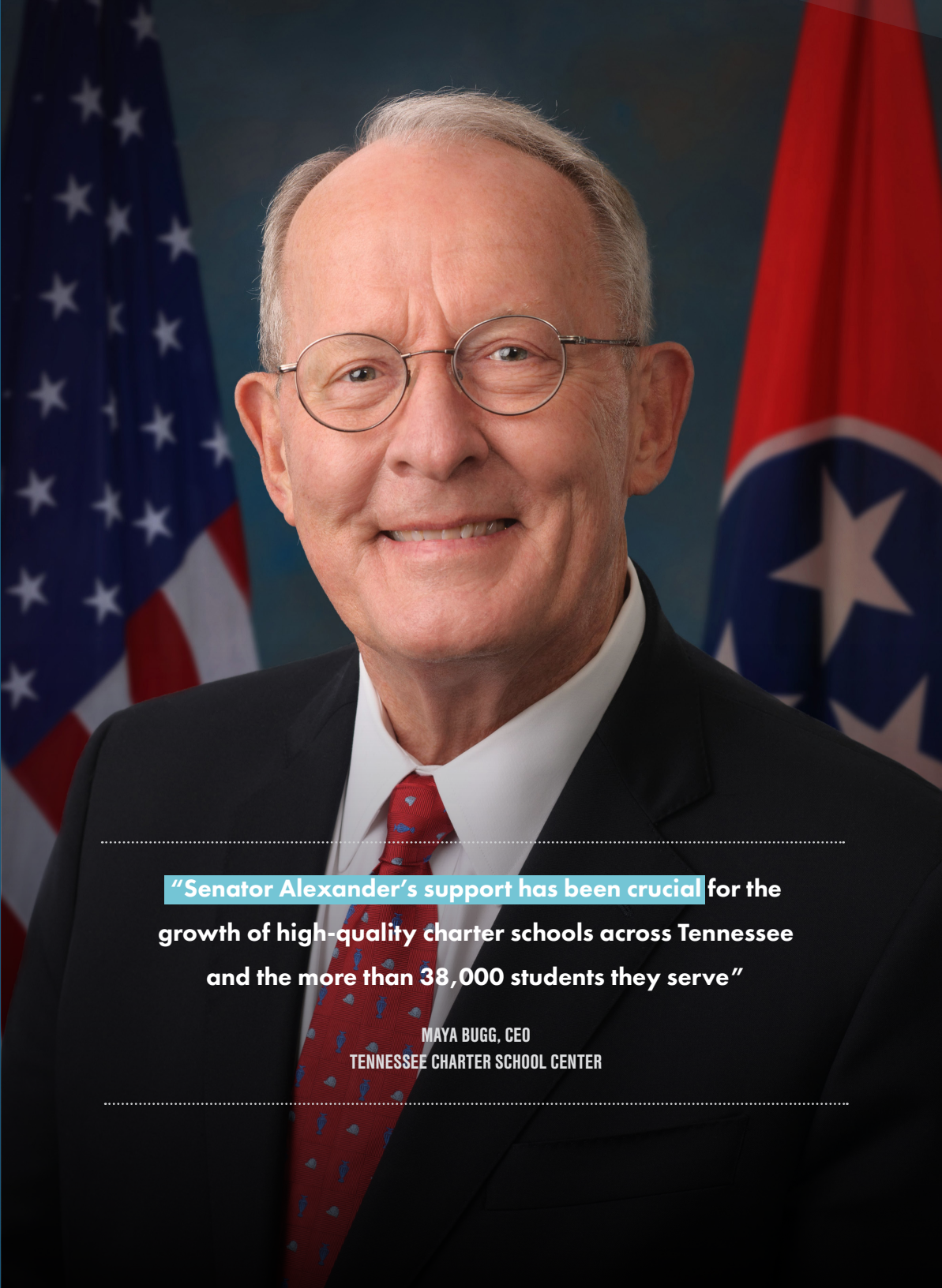
We had to play defense, too, calling out critics who use shoddy, politically motivated research to try to undermine charter schools. Specifically, we refuted a misleading report about the CSP and issued a fact sheet debunking false claims and setting the record straight with policymakers and journalists.

All told, our efforts helped to stave off threatened CSP funding cuts and maintain the CSP's \$440 million funding level from the previous year.

The 2020 elections also brought renewed attention to charter schools and accentuated the importance of the National Alliance's work, especially as we educated progressives about how charter schools align with their values. In response to the anti-charter Biden-Sanders Unity

Task Force Recommendations that were incorporated into the Democratic party platform, we organized a coalition of education and civil rights organizations to release a statement urging Mr. Biden to reconsider these harmful positions. We also coordinated more than 50 charter management organizations in sending a similar letter to the platform committee. In addition, 17 charter support organizations submitted letters to the Biden campaign, the Democratic Convention Committee, and Democratic members of Congress expressing concern about the unity taskforce recommendations on charter schools. While the Democratic party platform is not a binding document, the misguided effort to incorporate anti-charter policy into the platform offered an opportunity for our sector to come together and prepare to defend charter school students in the fights that may lie ahead.

As the year came to a close, we welcomed President-elect Biden to office. We look forward to working with him and with new and returning members of Congress on ways to expand access to high-quality public schools.



2020 LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD **SENATOR LAMAR ALEXANDER**

In May, the National Alliance presented the prestigious Charter Schools Lifetime Achievement Award to U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN). Since the award's inception there have only been two other recipients. The Charter Schools Lifetime Achievement Award is granted to extraordinary individuals who devote tireless passion in support of charter schools and dedicate their lives to accomplishing significant results for the charter school movement. As a former governor and U.S. secretary of education, Sen. Alexander has long understood the value of charter schools and worked hard to ensure more students had access to a high-quality public school. Sen. Alexander retired from the Senate at the beginning of 2021. We thank him for his steadfast support and wish him the best in his next chapter.

“Senator Alexander’s support has been crucial for the growth of high-quality charter schools across Tennessee and the more than 38,000 students they serve”

MAYA BUGG, CEO
TENNESSEE CHARTER SCHOOL CENTER



THE CHARTER SCHOOL FACILITY CENTER

In 2020, the primary focus of the Charter School Facility Center expanded from analyzing policy initiatives to providing direct assistance to schools. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, we quickly went to work disseminating critical information and best practices to the field, including through webinars on how to address construction delays and renegotiate leases during the pandemic.

Thanks to support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, we started the Schoolhouse Network to provide direct facility assistance to rural charter schools across the nation. This built on the success of our direct assistance to

schools in Idaho with the support of Bluum. So far, we have worked with 20 rural charter schools on their facility needs.

In conjunction with our Idaho partners, we also produced a Refinancing Guide that is being used by schools across the state and across the country to save money on facilities. In addition, we introduced TheLendingProject.com, a new charter school facility loan matching service for borrowers and lenders. It provides a one-stop shop through which charter schools can communicate with multiple lenders at once. Moving forward, we plan to blend our direct assistance with our policy efforts to best support the charter movement's facility needs.

FACT: In 2020, the work of the Charter School Facility Center saved charter schools more than \$20 million in expenses across the nation.

“The Charter School Facility Center was a critical partner in helping us put together school finance resources for Idaho schools that will allow them to put money into classrooms that otherwise would have had to go into brick and mortar.”

TERRY RYAN, CEO
BLUUM



CHARTER SCHOOL LEGAL ACTION FUND

The Charter School Legal Action Fund, founded in 2016 has been the leading legal arm for the charter school movement. Since its inception, we have been victorious 17 times in court. Although the pandemic has extended the timetable on some cases, we have been busy providing technical legal assistance to interested stakeholders. Prior to the pandemic, we achieved a significant victory in Florida, where the Florida Supreme Court upheld an intermediate appellate court's decision affirming HB 7069's constitutionality. We have also engaged in deep-dive technical assistance to support many of our ongoing cases, particularly in Minnesota and New Jersey.

Florida Victory

In Florida, the Legal Action Fund achieved a significant victory early in 2020 when the state Supreme Court upheld a favorable decision from the intermediate appellate court. The decision confirmed conclusively that HB 7069 constitutionally provided charter schools with, among other things, equitable access to local funding for capital projects. This litigation not only upheld the statute, but it also established favorable case law that local monies can, and should, follow the student, regardless of the type of school in which the student enrolls. Importantly, this favorable decision, coupled with similar case law out of the Louisiana Supreme Court and the Mississippi Supreme Court in recent years, can be leveraged across the country.

First-ever APCSA Virtual Conference

In December 2020, we hosted our first-ever virtual Alliance of Public Charter School Attorneys (APCSA) legal seminar. The seminar offered a variety of sessions concerning legal issues impacting the charter school community and proved to be one of our most well-attended conferences, with over 110 attendees. As the pandemic rages on, we will continue to utilize digital methods to engage and communicate with this important constituency.



SPREADING THE WORD



2,684
MEDIA HITS



23,800
TWITTER FOLLOWERS



20,600
FACEBOOK LIKES



66
BLOG POSTS



331,000
VIDEO VIEWS



295,000
SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS



33
OP-EDS

NATIONAL ALLIANCE MEDIA MENTIONS

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CBS MORNING NEWS

CNN

THE DETROIT NEWS

EDUCATION DIVE

EDUCATION NEXT

EDUCATION WEEK

FORBES

GOOD MORNING AMERICA

NATIONAL REVIEW

FOX NEWS

THE NEW YORK TIMES

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

POLITICO

REAL CLEAR EDUCATION

THE SEATTLE TIMES

THE STAR LEDGER

WASHINGTON EXAMINER

THE WASHINGTON POST

THE 74

2020 PUBLICATIONS

From The National Alliance

Measuring Up to the Model: A Ranking of State Public Charter School Laws, 2020

What Charter Schools Need to Know: Acting During The Impending Fiscal Downturn

What Policy Makers Need to Know: Closing The Digital Divide

The Federal Charter Schools Program 2020 Annual Report

Learning in Real Time: How Charter Schools Served Students During COVID-19 Closures

Charter Schools Program Success Stories

From The Charter School Facility Center

USDA Financing of Rural Charter Schools

Overview of State Facility Policies and Other Facility Strategies

State Policy Analysis Per-Pupil Facility Funding

State Policy Snapshot: Facilities Financing for Public Charter Schools

State Policy Analysis: State Support for School Facilities and Charter Schools

Charter School Facility Refinancing Guide and Toolkit





BRINGING THE MOVEMENT TOGETHER

More than 2,600 people participated in the first-ever National Charter Schools Virtual Conference. The virtual conference featured keynote speakers, breakout sessions, homerooms, and networking opportunities. Headliners included long-time charter school advocates Jeb Bush and Cory Booker.

This year's theme was *Remote Learning & Reopening: Reimagining School*. Sessions explored best practices and strategies to support students academically and emotionally, make remote education equitable and more accessible, and provide students with better academic experiences in the aftermath of the pandemic. Ninety-three percent of attendees agreed they will likely implement strategies learned during the conference in their school or organization.



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NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOLS CONFERENCE FEATURED SPEAKERS



LAYLA AVILA

CEO, Education Leaders of Color
In Memorium



**U.S. SENATOR
CORY BOOKER**

Democrat, New Jersey



MARC BRACKETT

Founder and Director, Yale Center for
Emotional Intelligence



GOVERNOR JEB BUSH

Chairman, Foundation for Excellence
in Education



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CEO, NewSchools Venture Fund



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President, Arizona State University



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CEO, STEM Preparatory Schools



BEATRIZ RENDÓN

Vice President of Strategic Initiatives,
Arizona State University



**ARTEMIS ROMERO Y
CARVER**

Rising Senior at the New Mexico
School for the Arts



DIANE TAVENNER

Co-founder and CEO, Summit Public
Schools



MAJOR SUPPORTERS

The National Alliance is grateful for the loyal support of our partners and friends. Thank you for helping us advance our mission to lead public education to unprecedented levels of academic achievement for all students.

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FINANCIALS

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools is a 501(c)(3) public charity funded through four principal revenue streams: foundations, individuals, partner organizations, and the National Charter Schools Conference.

REVENUE

Contributions	9,491,824
Government Grants	822,811
Other Income	149,999
TOTAL REVENUE	\$10,464,634

EXPENSES

Federal Advocacy	2,531,170
Communications	1,943,536
State Advocacy	1,933,934
Programs	1,279,911
Operations	1,255,090
Legal Advocacy	624,240
Development	510,241
Research	416,578
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$10,494,701



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Senior Advisor
School Support



RENITA THUKRAL
Senior National Advisor
Legal Affairs



2021-2023 STRATEGIC PLAN

The National Alliance is committed to ensuring that students across our country have the opportunity to attend an outstanding charter school. Nearly 30 years after the first charter school law was passed, the sector has grown to serve 3.3 million students annually. Our schools have demonstrated their ability to help students, particularly Black and Brown students, thrive in school and go on to college and successful careers. During these three decades, our sector has benefited from strong bipartisan support in Washington, D.C.

Today, however, opponents of charter schools are politically emboldened, and new economic challenges have the potential to threaten the hard-fought funding and policy protections that are critical to the growth and success of charter schools. To meet the challenges of this moment and to maintain support for long-term, sustained growth, the National Alliance must ensure that more Americans—more legislators, more advocacy groups, more community-based organizations, more parents, more teachers—understand the benefits high-quality charter schools bring to their communities and stand up for their success.

Our movement is founded in values that should be the hallmark of all public schools, and we will leverage these values to unify a broad, diverse coalition dedicated to ensuring that all students have access to high-quality public schools.

1. Students and families first: We put the needs of students and families first; as a result, the demand for charter schools is high, particularly among students and families who have been historically marginalized.

2. High-quality schools: We run high-quality schools, and when our schools are not ensuring students learn and grow, we hold them accountable.

3. Empowered leaders and teachers: We respect educators, and we empower leaders and teachers with the flexibility and resources to meet the needs of their specific students.

4. Innovation: We create and seek new ideas and opportunities that benefit our students.

5. Educational equity: We are relentless about ensuring all of our students, particularly students who have been historically marginalized, achieve academic success.

Guided by these values, the National Alliance will commit to achieving the following goals in its new strategic plan over the next three years:

- ▶ **Protect the federal Charter Schools Program** and the policy autonomies that have benefited charter schools for years
- ▶ **Create a broad coalition that actively advocates for the needs of charter schools** because of the value they bring to students, particularly students who have been historically marginalized
- ▶ **Fight and win battles at the state level** that pose the greatest threats or offer the greatest opportunities
- ▶ **Reestablish the brand of the charter movement** as one that puts students and families first, particularly students and families who have been historically marginalized

We look forward to elevating our values and progressing toward our goals in the years ahead, and we welcome the support of all who share our vision of putting high-quality public schools within reach of every student.



“I am here today because my children waited over three years before they were able to get into quality charter schools, and I believe no parent should have to wait to attend the public school that best meets the needs of their children.”

**ROSEZINA WILLIAMS
CHARTER SCHOOL PARENT
HOUSTON, TEXAS**





NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR
**PUBLIC
CHARTER
SCHOOLS**

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