



NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR
**PUBLIC
CHARTER
SCHOOLS**

STUDENTS FIRST,

RESULTS FOLLOW

YEAR IN REVIEW **2025**

20
25

YEAR IN REVIEW

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

STRENGTHENING PATHWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY

Dear Friends,

What a year! In 2025, we opened the doors to opportunity for charter schools and students nationwide, and I'm proud to share all we've accomplished.

Nearly 4 million students are now learning in charter schools. Enrollment is at an all-time high, driven by families who are choosing something different. No matter where they live, or what their backgrounds are, these families share a fundamental belief: one-size-fits-all approaches to learning just don't work. Charter schools meet kids where they are, with learning experiences that fit each child – and for our families, that's what matters.

At the end of the day, parents aren't distracted by agendas or talking points. They care about what works for their kids. They care that their kids are engaged, supported, and ready to learn. They care that their kids are getting the kind of future-ready education that more than 8,000 charters are providing *right now* to students nationwide.

We fight those policy battles, so parents don't have to. Great public schools shouldn't be reserved for kids born into a certain zip code: they should be available to every child, without exception. Strong policy and a shared vision of success will get us there – and we're committed to leading that charge.

Charter school families drive everything that we do. They're why we stay focused on solutions, especially at a time when charter schools need real support. When we do our jobs well, parents and families don't have to think about instructional models or governance. They just have schools that work for them, right in their neighborhoods.

As you'll see in this report, we've made clear progress toward that goal. We aimed high, and we got results. We advanced three bipartisan bills in Congress that will change the game for growing charter schools by removing red tape, empowering educators, and making facilities access fair. We delivered significant state policy wins – including passing a charter law for the first time in North Dakota. We protected charter schools at the U.S. Supreme Court. And we did it all while building a coalition of charter school champions that's stronger and more united than ever.

In the year ahead, we'll redefine what's possible for charter policy, all while going further, faster, on behalf of the students we serve. In all that we do, we'll be relentless in growing strong charter schools so that they reach more communities – and we won't stop until every family, everywhere, has access to a great public school.

This year, we're bringing the courage to stand up for kids and our best fight for their limitless potential. Meet you there.



Starlee Coleman, President & CEO

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.

VISION

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

WHAT WE DO

FEDERAL POLICY AND ADVOCACY

The National Alliance is the leading advocate for charter schools at the federal level. We are the charter school voice in Congress and with the Administration, activating supporters and working aggressively to ensure that the interests of charter schools are well represented when legislation is being crafted and regulations are being written.

STATE POLICY AND SUPPORT

States play a crucial role in charter school growth by establishing the legal and regulatory environment in which charter schools operate. Each state must fight for the freedom and funding charter schools need to be successful. Our legislative advocacy work with state-based partners cultivates state policy environments in which charter schools can flourish. We also provide hands-on support to state charter associations to ensure they have the capabilities to thrive.

LEGAL ADVOCACY

Charter schools regularly encounter legal threats to their growth and sustainability. While most of these cases are local, they can have a ripple effect, and copycat cases may pop up across the nation. To counter these threats and prepare for future challenges, the National Alliance provides technical assistance, expert analysis on emerging legal issues, and funding for significant legal cases. We also support cases that will secure charter school rights and expand opportunities for more students.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

BY THE NUMBERS

Families chose charter schools in record numbers in 2025 – and it’s easy to see why. These student-centered, high-quality public schools ground learning in the real world, setting kids up for success in school and in life. Currently serving students in 45 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, and Washington, D.C., charter schools empower students to think critically, solve problems, and build skills for the future.

251K
charter
school
teachers

nearly
4M
students

8,100+
charter schools
nationwide

15%
charter enrollment
growth over
six years



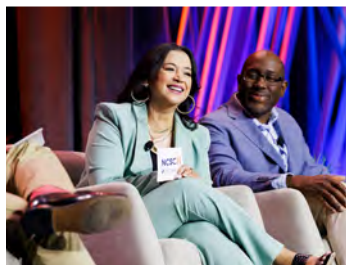
From her childhood in Jamaica, Shereen Reid dreamed of teaching in a classroom that felt like family. Today, she teaches fourth grade math at Somerset Prep North Lauderdale, where she was named 2025 Florida Charter School Teacher of the Year. Shereen's daughter also attended Somerset Prep – where she graduated as valedictorian. Her story reflects what the numbers prove: families across America are choosing charter schools for the quality, safety, and community they deliver.

“Somerset is a family atmosphere...teachers go the extra mile, parents are part of the learning, and students are safe. Our enrollment has gone up. So that's something that I'm very proud of because it just says that parents are taking notice of the work that our school is doing with their students.”

MOMENTUM DRIVING THE MOVEMENT

2025 NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOLS CONFERENCE

In June, the 2025 National Charter Schools Conference brought together more than 4,000 school leaders, teachers, policymakers, and advocates from across the country to collaborate, share ideas, and explore best practices. During the three-day event, visionary education leaders delivered an empowering message: parents know what's best for their children, and they deserve excellent public schools that meet students' unique needs. From powerful keynote messages to 86 breakout sessions, participants left feeling energized and ready to continue their critical work for students and families nationwide.



FEDERAL CHARTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM

30 YEARS OF IMPACT

We celebrated the 30th anniversary of the first Charter School Program (CSP) grant awards. For three decades, CSP funds have supported the launch and replication of charter schools in 43 states, Puerto Rico, and Washington, D.C. In recognition of this milestone year, we released a report, *“The Federal Charter Schools Program: 30 Years of Impact,”* which overviews that many ways the CSP has transformed the public education landscape since day one.

In September, the U.S. Department of Education announced recipients of the 2025 CSP grants. For the first time in six years, the CSP received a funding increase.

The CSP is the federal government’s only dedicated funding stream for creating and expanding high-quality public charter schools. Though it accounts for less than 2% of total federal K-12 spending, the CSP has an outsized impact: nearly half of all charter schools in the country received CSP support when they opened, and more than 1 million students today attend CSP-funded schools.

Applications for the grants doubled compared with previous cycles, reflecting unprecedented demand for new schools designed for real-world success.



95 ORGANIZATIONS — from national nonprofits to single-site charter schools — joined together on our letter asking Congress to support CSP funding.



ADVANCING ACCESS TO FAIR FACILITIES

We fought for – and won – key changes to the CSP through the appropriations process, which would make it easier for charter schools to access and afford facilities. Under the House version of the FY 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, the State Facilities Incentive Grant would cover up to 100% of the required state match in the first two years of a facilities project. Driven by sustained advocacy, these provisions would also expand the allowable uses for facilities support programs, so building financing strategies like revolving loan funds qualify for funding.



FEDERAL ADVOCACY IN ACTION

In 2025, the National Alliance fought alongside a bipartisan coalition of charter school champions to remove barriers to growth and quality, fight for equitable funding, and ensure all kids have the resources they need to learn and thrive.

For the first time ever, we're advancing three separate pieces of legislation through Congress to reform the Charter Schools Program (CSP). These bills are currently making their way through the legislative process, gaining significant support from both sides of the aisle.

FAIR FUNDING FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS:

The Equitable Access to School Facilities Act

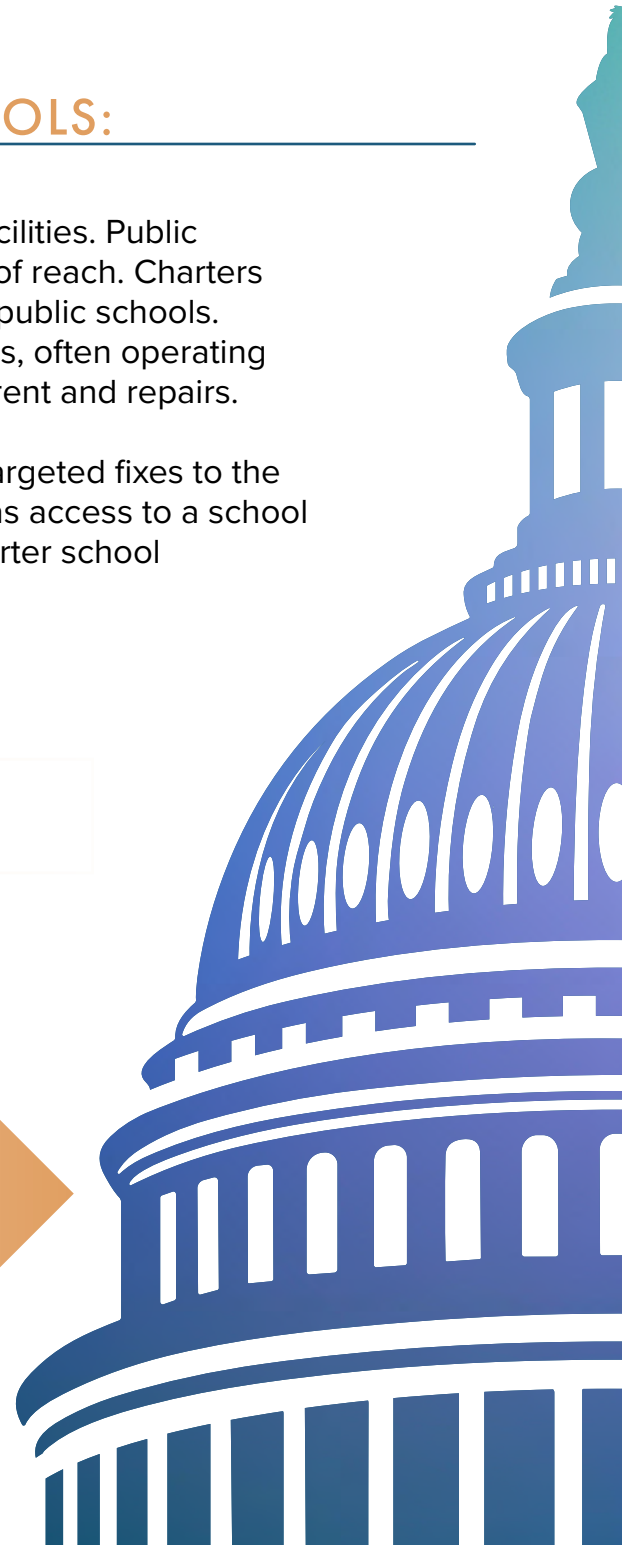
Charter schools face systemic barriers to securing school facilities. Public buildings – otherwise sitting empty – are regularly kept out of reach. Charters receive about 30% less funding per student than traditional public schools. Taken together, this means charter schools do more with less, often operating in subpar facilities and diverting classroom funds to pay for rent and repairs.

The Equitable Access to School Facilities Act offers smart, targeted fixes to the CSP to break down these barriers and ensure every child has access to a school building that supports their success. This bill would give charter school students access to key learning spaces – like science labs, gymnasiums, and libraries – while making safe, permanent school buildings to learn available to more kids.



Review our fact sheet for more details on the Equitable Access to School Facilities Act.

These bills don't create any new programs or spend new money:
they simply allow more flexibility in how current funds can be used.



SUPPORTING TEACHER-DRIVEN SOLUTIONS:

The Empower Charter School Educators to Lead Act

Great schools start with great teachers. But right now, too many talented educators are locked out of leading. At a time when demand for public charter schools has never been higher, there is no source of consistent public funding to support the application phase of developing a charter school. The application process can take years, often requiring teachers and administrators – those who know students and communities best – to leave their jobs to focus on applications full-time. Many educators simply can't take on this burden financially.

The Empower Charter School Educators to Lead Act provides up to \$100,000 over 18 months for proven educators applying to start new charter schools. Research shows this kind of support leads to stronger charter school applications, higher approval rates, and more effective school openings.

Review our fact sheet for more details on the Empower Charter School Educators to Lead Act.



REDUCING RED TAPE, MODERNIZING THE CSP:

The Fostering Learning and Excellence in Charter Schools (FLEX) Act

It's time to restore the original intent of the CSP: empowering states and schools with the flexibility to meet student needs. Unfortunately, over time, complicated regulations have created barriers to opportunity – slowing, or even preventing, these critical funds from reaching classrooms.

The National Alliance worked with Congress to put together the FLEX Act – game-changing legislation that would make the CSP more responsive to changing needs, allow for flexible budget management, and streamline processes for schools and staff.

In 2026, we'll continue to push for charters to have the resources they need to meet rising family demand and ensure the CSP supports innovation – both now and in the future.

Review our fact sheet for more details on the FLEX Act.



STATE LEADERSHIP THAT DELIVERS

State charter school laws govern how charter schools are run, how much they can grow, and how much funding they receive. We work directly with our state and local partners to support policy landscapes where charter school students, educators, and families thrive.

In 2025, we delivered notable wins for charter schools and students in five states: Maine, Montana, North Dakota, West Virginia, and Wyoming. We fought to make funding fair, remove barriers to growth, and ensure all kids have access to safe, collaborative learning spaces.

North Dakota becomes the
47TH STATE
to allow charter schools

In April, North Dakota passed SB2241 into law – authorizing the establishment, funding, and operation of public charter schools for the first time in the state’s history. After years of sustained advocacy, bipartisan collaboration, and an unwavering focus on students, North Dakota families finally have access to public school choice.

STATE SPOTLIGHT

WYOMING

We persuaded the legislature to override the Governor’s veto of our bill to remove Wyoming’s cap on charter school growth. The state also passed two other critical charter school bills in 2025, representing significant steps toward fair funding and facilities support. Thanks to this collective push, charter schools receive funding similar to traditional public schools and no longer face penalties for being in non-district buildings.



WEST VIRGINIA

We supported West Virginia lawmakers in passing two charter school bills. The first bill corrected a simple – but consequential – omission in the current state law, resulting in charter school students now having fair access to Medicaid reimbursement. By updating other key parts of the state’s charter school law, the second bill makes it easier for charters to grow and serve more West Virginia kids – including by establishing new “alternative high-risk” charters for disadvantaged students.



Beyond Alliance-led legislative wins in our five priority states, **state charter school associations** notched significant facilities, funding, and authorizing policy wins from coast to coast. *We are deeply grateful for the hard work, leadership, and persistence of our partners at state charter school associations, who drove meaningful change and made progress possible.*

FACILITIES



Removed a cap on charter school facilities funding and added \$100 million per year in formula funding for charter school facilities that will continue to grow year-over-year.



Raised cap on Moral Obligation Program to \$1 billion, allowing more charter schools to finance facilities sustainably and affordably in the coming years.



Increased charter facilities fund by \$20 million, closing key funding gaps.

FUNDING



Secured local property tax sharing; improved zoning; protected per-pupil funding; created local facilities and transportation authorities.



Provided \$38 million for charter school teacher raises and \$17 million to support student transportation for public charter schools over the next two years.



Included \$30.8 million for charter school educator compensation in the proposed budget, an unprecedented and overdue increase in pay for teachers and staff.

AUTHORIZING



Incentivized local school districts to approve more charters by holding districts accountable for repeated denials of high-quality petitions.



Created stronger pathways for authorization by allowing direct applications to the Tennessee Charter School Commission after repeated district denials; simplified the replication process.

PROTECTING CHARTER SCHOOLS IN COURT

In 2025, the U.S. Supreme Court weighed in for the first time on the public nature of charter schools when it heard arguments in *St. Isidore v. Drummond*.



A ruling redefining charter schools as private schools would have had far-reaching and devastating consequences.

Almost all charter schools are funded through state per-pupil funding formulas that are only available to public schools.

Many charters also have access to building-financing mechanisms with taxpayer backing or to public-school buildings themselves.

Charter teachers are typically considered public employees, allowing them to participate in state pension and healthcare programs.

Charter schools receive federal funding for low-income children, children with disabilities, and school meals.

None of this is available to private schools.

With so much at stake, the National Alliance deployed quickly to galvanize the charter community. In addition to our own amicus brief, a wide cross-section of charter stakeholders – including state associations, charter state associations, charter schools and networks, parents, and lawmakers – articulated their support of charters as public schools in their own amicus briefs.

74 organizations signed onto Supreme Court amicus briefs filed in the NAPCS-led campaign to preserve public charter schools in the *Drummond* case.

As part of our broad, coordinated communications strategy, we released an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal which explained all that was at stake in the *Drummond* case. The op-ed, “Supreme Court Could Crush Charter Schools,” was seen by over 8 million people and generated nearly 30,000 engagements across editorial and social channels.

The Supreme Court’s 4-4 decision represented a significant victory for charter schools, affirming the earlier Oklahoma Supreme Court ruling which concluded that charter schools are public and therefore cannot be religious.



STRONG, COORDINATED LEGAL ADVOCACY

Because the 4-4 *Drummond* decision did not produce binding national precedent, these issues have resurfaced. We're preparing the path forward by:

Analyzing state laws to assess risk and opportunity

Developing model legislation to guide future policy response

Articulating legal theories that explain to courts why charters are public

Deepening relationships with state partners

Defending charter laws in multiple states

Building Legal Momentum for Public Charter Schools

The *Drummond* case seeking to redefine charter schools as private schools was the first to reach the Supreme Court – but there are additional cases in the queue.

In 2025, we partnered with the California charter school community to secure an important win in *Woolard v. Thurmond*, a case before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. A unanimous three-judge panel confirmed California charter schools can be required to provide a nonsectarian curriculum under California law without violating parents' or students' First Amendment rights.

Along with the California Charter Schools Association, the Charter Schools Development Center, and the Association of Personalized Learning Schools & Services, we filed an amicus brief in the case.

The Ninth Circuit's decision affirmed what we have always maintained and what the law has supported: charters are public schools and, therefore, cannot be religious. This decision is also consistent with that of the *Drummond* case, which confirmed the same principle.

This decision strengthens our fight to defend charter law and protect the financial and operational foundation for charter schools in more states. At the end of 2025, a group seeking to open a religious charter school in Tennessee filed a lawsuit challenging the state's nonsectarian requirement. The National Alliance will help lead the defense of the law there because the state's Attorney General has said he will not. We are also expecting another legal challenge to the Oklahoma charter law. These cases are being filed with the intention of being fast-tracked back to the U.S. Supreme Court.

From the beginning and through the final decision, the National Alliance will continue to execute a coordinated strategy, unite partners, and guide the legal efforts that protect the ability of charter schools to grow and serve students.

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 yes. every kid.



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We extend our sincere gratitude to the members who have concluded their tenure after many years of strong leadership, service, and commitment to families in the choosing charter schools: Myrna Castrejón, Reed Hastings, Bill Kurtz, Marc Lampkin, Ana Ponce, and Joanne Weiss, Treasurer of the Board of Directors.

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