



NORTH CAROLINA COALITION FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS

2022 COALITION IMPACT REPORT

The Coalition worked throughout 2022 to protect and promote public charter schools. Our mission and vision direct work across three core areas: advocacy, communications, and education. Below, we include a summary of each area of impact.

ADVOCACY

Efforts focused on obtaining equitable funding, protecting charter autonomy, and advancing overall charter interests in law and policy. Legislative impacts included:

- Securing more equitable funding and favorable provisions for charters in the state budget, including teacher pay raises, \$3.9 million for student co-pays for reduced price school lunches, an increase of \$32 million for the School Safety Grants Program, a school resource officer grant match in low-wealth counties, and money for two additional positions in the Office of Charter Schools.
- Protecting charter autonomy and flexibility with virtual learning.
- Extending enrollment priority to the grandchildren of charter school employees or board members.
- Securing regulatory relief for charters by clarifying the requesting board for Residency License and tolling the terms of charters—allowing time to obtain land use approvals.
- Publicly recognizing charter supporters in the state legislature as “Charter Champions.”

Other advocacy impacts included:

- Opposing federal regulations threatening charter growth. Impacts included mobilizing charter supporters to take action, writing to Secretary Cardona to voice opposition, engaging in intensive public relations efforts, and joining an ongoing national lawsuit challenging the requirements.
- Engaging in work with the Department of Public Instruction to standardize forms and processes as local payments legislation continues to be implemented.
- Ensuring strong charter advocates were appointed to state boards and K-12 working groups, including the Charter Schools Advisory Board and the Superintendent’s advisory group on school performance grades redesign.
- Advocating for statewide charter growth, by urging State Board of Education approval of both accelerated and regular timeline charter applicants.
- Ensuring fairness for charter students in district admission to special program schools.

COMMUNICATIONS

Work focused on promoting charter schools, correcting misconceptions, and keeping charter leaders informed. Communications impacts included:

- Highlighting charter successes, clarifying misconceptions, and disseminating accurate information through ongoing public relations efforts. The Coalition drove media coverage favorable to charters by distributing press releases, placing op-eds, pitching stories, participating in radio and print media interviews, and publishing blog posts.

- Garnering over 30 Coalition media mentions throughout 2022, in publications such as *The Wall Street Journal*, *Charlotte Observer*, *News & Observer*, *EdNC*, Fox 46, WFAE, *North State Journal*, *Carolina Journal*, and more.
- Sending over 70 email campaigns through *Coalition Connection* and *Charter Chatter* newsletters. Monthly *Connection* newsletters provided members with comprehensive, timely updates on State Board of Education and Charter Schools Advisory Board meetings and actions, along with committee and legislative summaries from the General Assembly. Special editions of the *Connection* included breaking news and important information about legislation, elections, and more.
- Launching a monthly parent newsletter, *CharterBeat*, to inform charter parents about public policy debates impacting charter schools and build a database of parent names for advocacy purposes.

EDUCATION

Efforts included educating voters about pro-charter candidates and offering opportunities for charter leaders to learn about new issues impacting operations. Education impacts included:

- Contacting every candidate running for state or federal office in North Carolina in 2022 to solicit views on charter autonomy and fair funding.
- Publishing the questionnaire responses of over 100 candidates on the Coalition website.
- Releasing a list of N.C. House and N.C. Senate candidates approved by the Coalition Board of Directors, intended to serve as a voter guide for charter supporters.
- Engaging in funded, active voter education efforts for pro-charter candidates in highly competitive races, with a 75% win rate for targeted races.
- Hosting bi-weekly legislative update calls for members during the legislative session, covering bills with charter impacts. The Government Relations Team also offered legal updates on court cases and a recap of 2022 election outcomes.
- Keeping charter leaders informed about issues impacting their success through Zoom sessions that covered Demographics Mirroring Plans, a pilot program in the state budget, state investment opportunities, the Employee Retention Credit, and more.
- Offering charter leaders opportunities to network with charter colleagues, through an annual Coalition reception during the A.I.M. Conference.
- Promoting public awareness and education about N.C. charters by participating in a school choice expo and a panel at a national charter investor conference.

COALITION TEAM

- **Leadership** includes Lindalyn Kakadelis, the Coalition's executive director, and the organization's 11-member Board of Directors.
- **Advocacy** efforts are led by lobbyists Harry Kaplan and Dylan Reel of McGuire Woods Consulting, LLC, and Lee Teague of Teague Advocacy. Matthew Tilley, a partner at Womble Bond Dickinson, serves as the Coalition's counsel.
- **Communications** initiatives are led by Pat Ryan, the founder of Ryan Public Relations, and Kristen Blair, the Coalition's communications director.