



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

 [www.nycharters.net](http://www.nycharters.net) |  [info@nycharters.net](mailto:info@nycharters.net)



**New York**  
Charter Schools  
Association<sup>™</sup>

# A Note from the **ASSOCIATION**

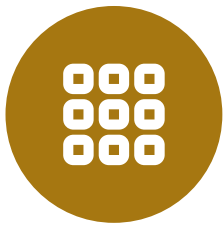


**With a new school year underway, the New York Charter Schools Association (NYCSA) welcomes students across the state back to school for another exciting year of progress and purpose!**

In the next year, NYCSA plans to find new ways to support our schools, ensure continued investment in equitable education opportunities, and help New York's public charter school sector continue to grow.

In hopes of building upon the progress earned over the past year, and learning from opportunities that still remain, this report provides a look back at what our public charter school community accomplished in 2022-23.

None of it could be done without your continued support. We thank you for standing up for New York's students.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Our Mission & Vision	4
Advocacy	5
Connecting New York's Charter Community	6
Member Support	10
Communications	11
Organization & Engagement	12
Looking Ahead	15
Contact Information	16





## Our **MISSION:**

The New York Charter Schools Association is a nonprofit membership organization that serves as a unified voice for the over 300 public charter schools, representing their interests at the state and local levels.

## Our **VISION:**

A growing, more effective public charter school sector will significantly increase student outcomes throughout the state. We envision a future where every child in New York has the opportunity to attend a great public charter school where they can unlock their full potential.

# ADVOCACY

## LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

Throughout last winter and spring, NYCSA consistently and staunchly advocated for four key priorities to be included in the state's 2023-24 budget:

- ✓ Fair funding for public charter school education.
- ✓ Streamlined state aid payments to public charter schools.
- ✓ Equal access to public education programs for public charter school students.
- ✓ Increased access to quality schools and a diversity in school leadership.

This work included several letter writing campaigns, which saw more than 1,800 letters sent to elected officials over the course of four months, as well as public testimony in Albany.

While the final budget passed by state leaders did have a provision that charters issued and subsequently returned or rescinded (so-called “zombie charters”) will not be counted toward the state cap, most of the items that the Association was fighting for were not included. That is why we will continue to advocate for our students and families in the coming year—and beyond—to ensure that they have every opportunity afforded to them to be successful and thrive both now and in the future.

## SCHOOL CHOICE WEEK

Every child deserves the opportunity to learn, thrive, succeed, and be happy. And every parent in New York should have the freedom to decide what school works best for their individual children. That was the message carried forward



by hundreds of families this past January as they arrived by the busload in Albany as part of National School Choice Week (NSCW).

Hosted by Children's Scholarship Fund, NYCSA, Families for NYC, and the Empire Center for Public Policy, the event brought parents representing traditional public, public charter, and private schools from across the state to the State Capitol to meet with their representatives and other statewide elected officials to share their stories of exercising school choice on behalf of their children. The event culminated with families gathering at the Million Dollar Staircase for an empowering celebration and media event.

# CONNECTING NEW YORK'S PUBLIC CHARTER COMMUNITY



## ENROLL BUFFALO CHARTERS

The Enroll Buffalo Charters (EBC) Common Application program launched in December 2020 with the goal to make it easier for families to learn about and apply for Buffalo's high quality public charter school options. Heading into its fourth year, the EBC network includes 18 of the region's 22 charters and has seen growth in both total applications as well as unique applicants in each of its years of operation.

Overall, EBC saw a 2.2% increase in total applications submitted during the Year 3 open enrollment period compared to Year 2. Unique applicants were up 5.3% with 132 more students applying to Buffalo charter schools than had during the same period for Year 2.

In its third year, EBC welcomed two new schools to the common application network: BRICK Buffalo and REACH Academy Charter Schools. In addition, EBC supported schools to further refine their student recruitment, application and lottery process to ensure an equitable offering of seats, consistent lottery procedures and targeted marketing efforts.



**37%**  
Increase in  
total applicants

*\* Reflects each individual application submitted by a student to EBC member schools.*



**34%**  
Increase in  
unique applicants

*\* Reflects the number of individual students who applied to EBC member schools, regardless of how many schools they applied to.*

## CAPITAL REGION CHARTERS WORK

Building off of the earlier success and momentum of the Capital Region Awareness Campaign that began in December 2021, in 2022-23 NYCSA continued to develop and support the engagement, collaboration and success of Capital Region public charter schools, their leadership teams, and the more than 4,000 students currently served throughout the area.





## MANHATTAN/HARLEM RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

The Association debuted an exciting opportunity for schools based in Manhattan this winter/spring in response to the challenges schools in that region were facing with reaching new families and enrolling new students. With support from a philanthropic partner, the Association partnered with CK Collaborative and Underdog Strategies to provide student recruitment coaching and resources to interested schools.

We invited all schools in Manhattan to participate in a series of roundtables and shared a suite of resources focused on three high-leverage tactics: community outreach, parent referrals and applicant engagement. For a subset of schools in Central Harlem, we piloted a collective digital and canvassing campaign to collect leads and applicants.

### As a result of this work:

- ✓ 13 schools/networks participated in roundtable discussions and utilized the templates shared.
- ✓ Central Harlem project
  - Collected nearly 300 leads (149 through digital ads and 143 through neighborhood canvassing)
  - Exposed over 81,000 people in our target geography in Central Harlem to ads about charter schools
  - Converted 91 leads to applicants (a rate of 31%)
  - Saw 81% of all applicants from non-charter schools (i.e. DOE schools, private schools, etc.)
  - Resulted in 100% of school participants saying they would recommend participating in a pilot like this in the future.

## BRONX COALITION

The Bronx Coalition was started in 2022 with the goal of bringing public charter schools in the Bronx together. As of August 2023, there are currently 33 member schools engaged in the Coalition, accounting for about one third of all public charter schools in the Bronx.

NYCSA facilitated five virtual meetings throughout the past school year, covering topics such as:

- ✓ Ways to improve student achievement
- ✓ Student and staff mental health and wellbeing
- ✓ Student recruitment best practices
- ✓ Physical activity and performance links
- ✓ Supporting migrant students and families

These meetings featured more than a dozen guest speakers from throughout the state and included professionals in the children and family services sectors, New York State elected officials, and charter school leaders and experts in student recruitment and wellness.

Looking to the 2023-2024 school year, the Coalition is committed to meeting the needs of member schools and fostering a sense of community throughout public charter schools in the borough.



## BUFFALO TEACHER COMPENSATION PROJECT

During the 2022-23 school year, NYCSA engaged in a two-phased teacher compensation project to assist Buffalo school leaders in addressing teacher retention and recruitment. Supported by funding from the Cullen Foundation, the initial phase produced a benchmark analysis comparing salary and compensation systems among Buffalo's charter schools with local school districts. Findings from the comparison analysis informed a second phase to this project, which was a three-part workshop developed in partnership with Edgility Consulting, helping schools refine their compensation strategy and better communicate the total value proposition of their roles to staff.



## ROCHESTER BOARD MEMBER CONVENINGS

During the 2022-23 school year, NYCSA held quarterly meetings with board members from charter schools across Rochester. The purpose of these meetings was to elevate common issues facing schools in the region, share best practices and board training advice, and align on a vision for region-wide advocacy. These meetings were well attended by representatives from across Rochester schools and are slated to continue on a quarterly basis for the 2023-2024 school year.



## 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

On May 18, 2023, more than 200 public charter school supporters from throughout the state convened on Inside Park at St. Bart's in Manhattan to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the passage of the New York State Charter Schools Act. The event, hosted by NYCSA, brought together leaders in education, policymakers and members of the charter school community to celebrate the historic milestone.

In addition to guest speakers from throughout the public charter school community, attendees were also treated to a very special performance by students from Democracy Prep. Former Governor George Pataki, a longtime champion of public charter schools, delivered the evening's keynote address.

Thank you to everyone who attended the event as well as to all of those who have played a role in the success of our students and our schools throughout the past 25 years!



**"It's one thing to pass a law, it's another thing to make it work. And that's what you all have done here. Today, hundreds and hundreds of thousands of New York kids have had a better education because of you,"**

.....  
*former Governor Pataki*

# MEMBER SUPPORT



## SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAMMING

NYCSA directly supports schools in various ways, including online working groups, monthly webinars, bi-weekly email updates and in-person school collaborations. These platforms communicate vital information to member schools on a routine basis and cover numerous topics important to school leaders in every region.

- ✓ **Working groups are available** for different roles within member schools, with a specific focus on data, operations and board members. These working groups meet regularly via Zoom and connect professionals for conversation, collaboration and learning. In 2022-23, NYCSA also hosted a three-part working group series for school leaders serving upper grades and high school. These sessions discussed successful

high school models, dove deep into the greatest common challenges high schools face annually, and culminated in a discussion with state authorizers at the 2022 New York Charter Schools Conference in Buffalo, N.Y. In total, NYCSA hosted 24 working groups throughout the past school year.

- ✓ **Monthly webinars convene** once a month via Zoom with member schools attending. These virtual meetings provide members with direct access to timely information from the state's charter school authorizers and topic area experts, and are held in collaboration with the New York State Education Department, the SUNY Charter Schools Institute, the NYC Department of Education, and the New York City Charter Center. Monthly webinars often feature public charter school representatives as guest speakers who present on the meeting's focus topic, which could cover anything from events or happenings at their school to protocols and takeaways from what is practiced at their school that they would like to share with fellow educators or administrators.
- ✓ **Bi-Weekly Updates** are sent via email to NYCSA members and administrators with updates regarding the Association, member school highlights and important info about the public charter school sector in New York State. The emails also cover national and statewide updates that pertain to education and charter schools and inform recipients of any actionable steps they can take in support of public charter schools in New York State. During the 2022-2033 school year, 20 bi-weekly updates were distributed with an average open rate of 25.17 percent.



- ✓ **Critical Friends Visits** are in-person events, facilitated by NYCSA, where a host school welcomes leaders from other schools across the state to address a specific problem of practice through a structured solutions-generation protocol. Throughout the past year, Critical Friends visits were held at Renaissance Charter School (Queens), Amani Public Charter School (Mount Vernon), Discovery Charter School (Rochester), New Dawn Charter High School (Brooklyn) and Buffalo Academy of Science Charter School (Buffalo). In total, more than 60 public charter school professionals attended the events.

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The New York Charter Schools Conference is the only state-wide gathering for leaders in the New York State public charter school community. Hosted by NYCSA, this annual conference brings together educators, policymakers and stakeholders to share best practices, discuss current issues and learn about new developments in the field of public charter schools.

The 2022-23 conference was held in Buffalo, NY, and welcomed more than 300 attendees from across the state. Throughout the course of three days, conference guests heard from distinguished keynote speakers and panels and had the opportunity to participate in a number of workshops on topics such as school governance, finance, curriculum, and student achievement.



### Highlights included:

- ✓ Buffalo Charter School Leader Panel that was moderated by former US Representative Chris Jacobs
- ✓ The welcoming address to the city delivered by Mayor Byron Brown
- ✓ Student performances from the choir at West Buffalo Charter School, presentation of colors by the color guard from WNY Maritime Charter School, and an address from EVCS student, Mehki Franklin
- ✓ Authorizers Lisa Long, Karonne Jarrett Watson and Susan Gibbons conducted a Q&A session and SUNY presented on their original research about accelerated learning, which was presented by Erin Allen and Kalila Hoggard
- ✓ In addition to on-site professional development, guests also participated in school tours throughout the Buffalo-area and visited local sites such as the Buffalo Museum of Science and Niagara Falls.



# COMMUNICATIONS

## TELLING THE STORIES OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

The Association has devoted new resources to expanding communications staff and finding unique ways to share the story of New York's public charter schools through earned media placements, ensuring their voices are a part of the conversation.



## HELPING OUR PARTNERS SPREAD THE MESSAGE

We collaborate with our partner organizations and assist them in securing media coverage, drafting public statements and crafting the message to help ensure that it reaches those in power at the most critical moments for our schools and communities.

## COMBATING PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL MISINFORMATION

NYCSA and partners throughout the public charter school space were able to combat a flurry of charter misinformation as our sector endured some of the strongest, most strident charter opposition exhibited since before the COVID-19 pandemic began. From inaccuracies about public charter school funding to the populations we serve, the Association used owned, earned and paid media to set the record straight.



# ORGANIZING & ENGAGEMENT

## PARENT COUNCIL

### Parent council by the numbers

**50-70** parents involved

**10** virtual meetings  
throughout the year

**350** engaged attendees of  
meetings annually

**440** members of Parent  
Council Facebook Group



NYCSA knows that parents are powerful champions for public charter schools as they are a key stakeholder. Parent Council aims to serve as a community to bring charter families together, help parents understand policy, and connect them with their elected officials to be effective advocates for our students and our schools.

The Parent Council meets online throughout the school year and summer. These meetings often include guest speakers, from college

admissions experts to state legislators, and cover topics such as:

- ✓ Building a Parent Council board through elections
- ✓ College information
- ✓ Letter writing campaigns to local elected officials
- ✓ Advocacy for charter schools
- ✓ School testing



## VOTER REGISTRATION

NYCSA recognizes that voting is one of the most powerful things you can do for your family and your community. That is why we are committed to working with the public charter school community to Get Out the Vote by providing various resources and training opportunities to help all those eligible to vote feel empowered and prepared to participate in upcoming elections.

Throughout the past year, the Association created a comprehensive section on its website to share important voting resources, such as how to register to vote, how to request an absentee ballot and how to restore your voting rights. In addition, visitors to the website can also find a digital voter registration toolkit for schools that includes sample social media captions, graphics, flyers and links.

In addition to online resources, NYCSA also offered members the opportunity to schedule virtual or in-person registration sessions and to request voter registration kits. Team members also hosted in-person events on National Voter Registration Day with elected officials across the state in Buffalo, Brooklyn and the Bronx. Through these efforts, nearly 150 eligible voters were newly registered to vote.



## 2022-23 BY THE NUMBERS

**140**  
Voters  
Registered

**1,800+**  
letters sent to elected officials  
through various online campaigns

**Hosted National Voter  
Registration Day events with  
elected officials and in Buffalo,  
Brooklyn, and the Bronx**

**76**  
Public charter  
schools renewed

**31**  
Charter  
Champs

**350**  
Engaged parents and partners during our  
2022-23 Parent Council Meetings (440  
Parent Council Facebook Members)

**120**  
elected official touchpoints with most that have  
charter schools in their districts via school visits,  
virtual meetings, in-person meetings, lobby days,  
letter-writing campaigns, and during legislative  
meetings events



Our success is possible not only because of what we do but also because of who we are as a community.

**We are stronger together. Thank you for being in the fight.**



## LOOKING AHEAD

As evidenced by the pages of this report, NYCSA, along with public charter school parents, school staff, community supporters, students, and alumni, have done important things this past year. We have worked together to raise the voices of those most in need of support in our communities and have moved the needle towards equity for all. And while we have much to celebrate, our work is far from over.

Looking ahead to 2023-24, NYCSA will continue to advocate on behalf of the 160,000 public charter school students throughout our state. We will fight for more seats and more schools, to ensure that all parents can make the very best decision possible for their child's education. We will fight for fair and equitable funding and for the same opportunities as all other public schools in our state. And we will continue to provide the support our member schools need and deserve to serve their future leaders.

But we cannot do this work alone. And so we call on you to help us amplify the voices of the next generation and walk with us down the path of progress for New York's public charter schools.

# CONTACT INFORMATION

## MEET THE TEAM

Anna Hall, *Chief Executive Officer*

Natasha Cherry-Perez, *Chief of Staff*

Janique Curry, *Community Engagement Manager*

Michael Good, *Director of School Support*

Yvonne Guillen, *Community Engagement Manager*

Tamika Marcellin, *Community Engagement Manager*

Haley Moffatt, *Communications Manager*

Diamond Weaver, *Community Engagement Manager*



## STAY IN TOUCH

New York Charter  
Schools Association

187 Wolf Road, Suite 300-019  
Albany, NY 12205  
518.218.6575

 [www.nycharters.net](http://www.nycharters.net) |  [info@nycharters.net](mailto:info@nycharters.net)



[Facebook](#)



[Twitter](#)



[Instagram](#)



[LinkedIn](#)



[YouTube](#)