

## Arizona Charter Schools Association 2016 Policy Positions

### School Funding Ballot Initiative

The Association will work to support the passage of Proposition 123 on May 17, 2016 as this is the first step to stable and predictable funding.

### Funding

The Association supports increased equitable student funding. Arizona is a robust school choice state where 30 percent of the public schools are charter schools and offers families open enrollment at any public school. However, the state's education funding system is outdated and inconsistent with Arizona's school choice policies. It must be modernized.

### Charter Autonomy and Growth

With over 20 years of charter school options for Arizona students and families, the Association will continue to promote the growth of Arizona's 556 charter schools serving 170,755 students. The Association will also continue to advocate for charter school autonomy by eliminating unnecessary statutes.

### Achievement/Accountability

The 2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress shows Arizona's charter students are outperforming nearly every other state in 4<sup>th</sup> grade and 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading and math. Charter students are also academically exceeding locally. Nearly all of the highest performing LEAs (school district or charter holder) on the 2015 AzMERIT exam were charters (49 of 50 on the English/Language Arts exam and 48 of 50 on the Math exam). In addition, charter students outperformed the state average of students passing the test in ELA and Math by 5-12 percentage points in every grade level, according to 2015 AzMERIT results.

Arizona's accountability measures are suspended for the 2015 results. While charters receive an A-F letter grade, charters authorized by the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools are also held to an additional accountability system. The Association supports one accountability measure – an A-F system – that accurately and fairly reflects educator instruction and student achievement for all public schools.

Above all other priorities, the Association supports local control. Schools should retain the right to choose curriculum consistent with their educational philosophy. The Association supports a periodic public review of Arizona standards.

### Facilities

Access to and maintenance of school facilities is a key challenge facing Arizona's public schools. The Association supports policies that will provide greater access to affordable capital financing. In particular, the Association will support legislation that provides quality schools with access to lower cost financing through partnerships with the State of Arizona. Doing so will enhance the quality of educational options for students.

### Grassroots

The Association receives regular input from our Charter Leaders Advisory Council, Board of Directors and school members via campus visits; annual advocacy tour; summits; weekly Wednesday email; and weekly legislative phone calls. Our Wednesday email is a consistent, credible source of information for all members, leaders and Association advisors. During the legislative session, we hold weekly conference calls to provide Association members direct access to our lobbyist to discuss specific pending bills. In addition, we annually participate in a statewide advocacy tour in late August to talk to charter leaders about our advocacy work and issues they are interested in pursuing. The Association's team also attends regional meetings throughout the year to provide support and advocacy updates.

### About the Association

The mission of the Arizona Charter Schools Association is to support student achievement through quality charter schools; to advocate for student equity and charter school autonomy; and to lead Arizona charter schools as a sustainable, strong, and credible organization. Founded in 1995, the Association has grown to be the key resource and advocate for Arizona's charter schools, a groundbreaker in transforming public education in Arizona, and a leader in the national charter movement.