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## **New Jersey Public Charter School Families Meet with Lawmakers During Annual Day of Advocacy**

### *Urge Restoration of Emergent Project Facilities Funding*

TRENTON - June 6, 2024 – Yesterday representatives from the New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association (NJPCSA) were joined by more than thirty public charter school parents, alumni and advocates from Camden, Paterson, Newark, Trenton, Plainfield, and Jersey City at the Statehouse for Public Charter School Parent Lobby Day.

"I was proud to meet with our state legislators today to share my story and talk about the transformative work public charter schools are doing for children like mine in communities across the state. Every child in New Jersey deserves access to a great school that meets their individual needs and public charter schools are helping fulfill that mission," **said Legna Garcia-Rodriguez, whose child attends Paterson Charter School for Science and Technology.**

Public charter school supporters walked the halls of the State House, attended committee hearings, and engaged lawmakers on the critical role public charter schools play in the state's educational landscape, particularly the tremendous work they are doing to end educational disparities in New Jersey.

While in the State House, parent advocates also urged lawmakers to restore aid for repairs and maintenance in public charter school buildings, which is currently facing a \$5 million cut in the Governor's proposed budget. The Charter School Emergent Project and Capital Maintenance Fund helps public charter schools make roof repairs and HVAC upgrades, fix broken windows and doors, and address other critical safety concerns. The funding is facing more than a 50 percent reduction from last year's levels.

"It's time for public charter schools to receive the fair treatment they deserve. All students, whether in public charter or traditional district schools, deserve funding for safe, healthy, and modern educational spaces," **said Harry Lee, President and CEO of NJPCSA.** "The lack of funding for public charter school facilities strains school budgets and diverts crucial resources from students and educators. We must address this issue to ensure all children have the best possible chance to succeed."

Public charter schools, which educate 1 in 5 students in New Jersey's most under-resourced communities, have historically been excluded from school construction funding. On average, public charter schools must spend \$2,000 per student from their operating budgets on building needs,

diverting resources that could be used to increase teacher salaries, purchase classroom supplies, and technology.

"We have students in buildings that are well over 100 years old where pipes burst, boilers break, windows won't open, and roofs leak," **said T.J. Best, Senior Advisor at NJPCSA.** "This is about fairness and equity for all of New Jersey's students, regardless of the type of school they attend."

"LEAP is committed to uplifting and providing opportunities for families from cradle through college and career. Parent advocacy is an important part of empowering our school community and we were happy to share with lawmakers the good work that we are doing for Camden families every day," **said Maria Cruz, Parent Liaison at LEAP University Academy Charter School in Camden.**

For more information, please visit [www.njcharters.org](http://www.njcharters.org) and follow the New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for more updates.

### **About the New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association (NJPCSA)**

The NJPCSA is a non-profit membership association representing the state's public charter school community, dedicated to advancing quality public education for New Jersey's children through the cultivation of excellent public charter schools. With 86 public charter schools serving more than 63,000 students, NJPCSA seeks to influence legislative and policy environments, leverage collective advocacy, and provide resources to support high-quality, public charter schools.

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