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NJ Public Charter School Parents Meet with Lawmakers, Urge Full Restoration of Emergent Project School Facilities Funding

Facilities funding for public charter schools cut by 75% in Governor's proposed budget

TRENTON, NEW JERSEY - June 6, 2024 – Today representatives from the New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association (NJPCSA) were joined by 35 public charter school parents and advocates from Camden, Paterson, Newark, Trenton, Plainfield, Jersey City, and other communities at the State House for Public Charter School Parent Lobby Day. Parents met with legislators as part of their ongoing #SameKidsSameNeeds campaign to fully restore aid for repairs and maintenance in public charter school buildings that was cut in Governor Murphy's proposed budget.

"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 immediately to ensure all children have the best possible chance to succeed."

Parents walked the halls of the State House, attended committee hearings, and engaged lawmakers on the need to fully fund the Charter and Renaissance School Emergent Project and Capital Maintenance Fund. In the Governor's proposed budget, funding was decreased from \$20 million to \$5 million, representing a 75% cut in critical facilities funding.

"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. We must recognize that these are all our children, regardless of the type of school they attend."

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 charters 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.

"As a parent of a public charter school student and a strong supporter of educational equity, I've seen first hand how with the resources we've received in the past we've repaired our leaking roof and made spaces more accessible for students and staff," **stated Athena Davis-Shaw, whose child attends**

Philip's Academy Charter School in Newark. "However, the repairs from Hurricane Ida are still ongoing and we need funding to continue fixing damage from the storm."

"LEAP is committed to providing opportunities for families from childhood through college and career, but the state is not doing its part to ensure we're getting the necessary resources for our facilities," **said Maria Cruz, Parent Liaison at LEAP University Academy Charter School in Camden.** "I'm asking Governor Murphy and the Legislature to restore this funding and make sure every school is a place where our kids can learn and grow."

For more information, please visit www.FacilitiesFunding4AllKids.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 85 public charter schools serving more than 62,000 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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