



Testimony from the Northeast Charter Schools Network on the
Executive Budget Proposal Fiscal Year 2019-2020
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing of the Senate Committee on Finance
and the Assembly Committee for Ways and Means

February 6, 2019

Good afternoon Chairwoman Mayer, Chairman Benedetto and other distinguished members of the Senate and Assembly. My name is Anna Hall and I am the CEO of the Northeast Charter Schools Network. The Northeast Charter Schools Network (NECSN) is a statewide advocacy organization for the 292 charter schools in New York State, 241 in New York City and Long Island, and 51 in Upstate New York. Collectively, these schools employ more than 13,000 professional staff, including over 10,000 teachers that serve over 157,000 students throughout the State.

The Network's mission is to support and expand high quality public charter schools in New York State. As an advocacy group for all charter schools in New York, which represents charter schools large and small, upstate and downstate, independent and network-managed, we understand the urgency and need to support all public schools across the state in a context of collaboration, which is ultimately in the service of children and their families.

Our Network supports Governor Cuomo's Executive Budget proposal to maintain the charter school funding formula defined by current law. There continues to be, however, a persistent problem of student funding equity between charter schools and traditional district schools, and this formula does not resolve the problem. This issue is only exacerbated by requiring Upstate charter schools in particular, to use per-pupil funding on facilities, when they should be investing those funds in the classroom. NECSN believes strongly that public charter schools and public charter school families should receive equal funding as other public schools.

The Governor's proposal also includes a one-time bullet aid allocation of \$24.9 million to New York City charter schools. NECSN strongly supports this funding, and, as the advocacy group for all charter schools in New York State, would further call for an expansion of these funds to reach all charters, regardless of their location.

Access to high-quality schools is a hallmark of the state of New York; Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Long Island, and other Upstate communities- alongside New York City- benefit from the options that charter schools provide and should receive the support of this Committee as champions of education and the future of those communities.

Once again, I thank the chairs and committee members for the opportunity to introduce ourselves and comment today. I welcome any questions from the panel.