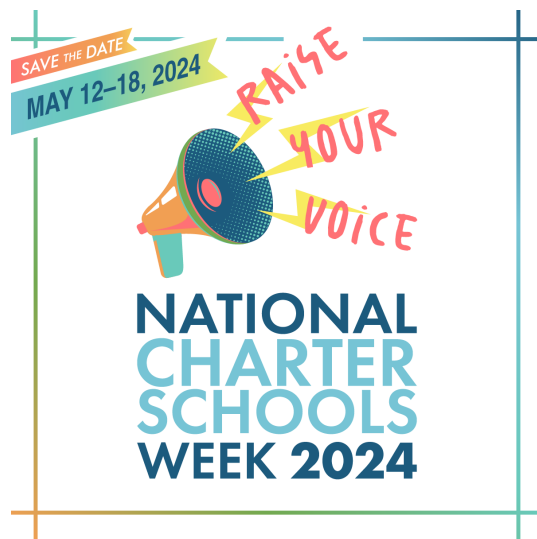




Partner Toolkit

National Charter Schools Week 2024: Raise Your Voice

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools is proud to celebrate [National Charter Schools Week](#), May 12-18. This year's theme is Raise Your Voice—and we plan to do just that.

We are louder together and a growing chorus of voices. We are united. We are public schools. We are charter.

Schedule of National Alliance Announcements and Events

- **Thursday, May 2:** [Preview webinar recording](#) and [national press release of upcoming events](#).
- **Sunday, May 12:** Prepare to celebrate National Charter Schools Week all week long—and share a special recognition for the moms in our movement on Mother's Day.
- **Monday, May 13:** The [official announcement](#) of the seven [2024 Changemakers](#). These individuals are recognized for raising their voices for charter schools and the students who attend them.
- **Tuesday, May 14:** The release of the 2024 Charter Schools Program (CSP) Impact Report, reminding us all why we fight for our schools and public funding as public schools going above and beyond for students.
- **Wednesday, May 15:** An event in Washington, D.C. honoring and hearing from the seven Changemakers and why they raise their voice for charter schools.
- **Thursday, May 16:** Launch of Season 2 of the Get Schooled in Public Education Podcast
- **Friday, May 17:** This is your chance for you and your community to share far and wide why you raise your voice for charter schools with #CharterLove.
- **Saturday, May 18:** Keep the celebration going by finding ways to get involved.

- Where there is space, families want seats in charter schools.
- American parents across the political spectrum are broadly supportive of charters: 73% of parents with school-aged children expressed their approval of charter schools in a recent poll and 93% agree that one size does not fit all in education, according to a recent survey of parents by [The Harris Poll](#).
- **Charter schools are student-centered and can serve the unique needs of each of their communities in ways that district public schools cannot.**
 - In exchange for local autonomy regarding students' education and wrap-around services, charter schools must meet or exceed the goals laid out in their charter such as student proficiency and community service.
 - Families choose public charter schools in part because they are often run by community leaders and former teachers who want the autonomy to make decisions to best meet the unique needs of their students and their families.

SPREAD THE WORD!

Incorporate these talking points into your communications about National Charter Schools Week!

Quick Hits:

- Raise your voice for charter schools and public education.
- We are louder/stronger/better together.
- Nearly 4 million students strong!
- Charter schools raise the bar in public education.
- Charter schools lead innovation and growth in public education.
- Every family should have access to a high-quality public education—charter schools deliver on this promise.
- We are innovation in public education. We are community builders. We are public charter schools!
- I raise my voice for charter schools because_____.

General Talking Points:

- **Charter schools are always public, always free, and always open to all students.**
 - Charter schools are an important part of the American education landscape serving nearly 4 million students—two-thirds of whom are from low-income, Black or Latino communities.
 - 251,000 dedicated teachers working in 8,000 schools and campuses across the country.
- **All students and families deserve access to a high-quality public education.**
 - The nation's 8,000 public charter schools are committed to ensuring that happens—providing a free, student-centered learning environment to nearly four

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million students, the majority of whom are Black, Brown, and from low-income communities, and millions more families who are hoping to have the same opportunity.

- **Charter schools are the only part of public education that is steadily growing.**
 - Over the last four school years (2019-20 to 2022-23), [charter schools gained](#) more than 300,000 new students, an increase of 9%. Meanwhile, district public schools lost 1.5 million students at the beginning of the pandemic and enrollment has not rebounded over the past three years, creating a net loss of 3.5%.
- **Public charter schools are an important part of the public education community. These unique public schools serve 3.7 million learners—nearly 70% students of color—and the teaching staff reflects this diversity.**
 - According to the [National Center for Education Statistics](#), nearly one in three charter school teachers and school leaders are educators of color.
 - This exceptional group of educators can do what many thought impossible: educate students from all backgrounds and support them to achieve academic success.
- **The Charter Schools Program (CSP) is the only source of federal funding for start-up, replication, and facilities for public charter schools.** We call on congressional leadership to increase funding and flexibility to support access to facilities and support educators, including educators of color, who are inspired to open new schools. Read more in our *2024 CSP Impact Report - Coming soon!*
- There are two bills before Congress to increase the effectiveness and accessibility of the CSP:
 - The bipartisan [Equitable Access to School Facilities Act](#) (S. 1480) will ensure access to public property and provide federal grants to states for charter school facilities. The grants, available from the CSP, can be used by charter schools to acquire and renovate existing facilities, cover ongoing facilities costs, or create a reserve fund for future acquisition, renovation, or maintenance. Additional CSP funding will remove financial barriers to starting new schools and expanding existing high-performing schools. All public school students should have the right to learn in a safe, clean, and functional environment.

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- The [Empower Charter School Educators to Lead Act](#) (H.R. 6418 and S. 3072) would allow state grantees to allocate CSP grant funding for pre-planning grants for school leaders and educators looking to start high-quality public charter schools. The funds in this bill are intended to help equalize the opportunity for educators and school leaders who want to open a charter school but lack access to resources needed to navigate the complex process and planning costs required to submit a high-quality charter school application. This public support may be especially valuable to educators of color, from low-income backgrounds, or in rural areas who may have less access to philanthropic support.

About the 2024 Changemakers

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools is thrilled to announce the 2024 recipients of the annual **Charter School Changemaker Award**, all seven of whom are public charter school advocates. The Changemaker Award honors individuals who are making an exceptional difference in their charter schools and communities, and who go above and beyond to shape their students' lives for the better. These seven individuals are unique in their communities, but together, are representative advocates for public education and for creating more high-quality public education options for families.

[Learn more about our Changemakers.](#)

[View our press release.](#)

Please join us in celebrating the 2024 Changemakers:

Jametrica McAdams, Parent, Hueytown, Alabama

Jametrica Powell-McAdams is a parent of three and a former 7th Grade ELA educator. Her children inspired her to step outside of the classroom and become an advocate for equitable learning. This love for learning has blossomed into a journey geared to promote and empower parent leadership. Jametrica created the 3rd Grade Parent Circle at Empower Community School in Bessemer, AL, where her son attends school. The Parent Circle is a space for parents to get involved in school, hold school leaders accountable, and build skills and knowledge about

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how to be a parent advocate. She is an alumna of New Schools for Alabama's Parent Voice Fellowship.

Zak Dominello, Executive Director at Ricardo Flores Magon Academy, Denver, Colorado

Zak is the Executive Director and Principal of Ricardo Flores Magon Academy. He has experience as an elementary and secondary school administrator and a special education director. As a leader in a turnaround school, Zak uses his platform to advocate, provide resources for, and serve his community in any way he can. He has hosted legislators and policymakers at the school, educating them on the importance of school funding, equitable access for all and breaking down the barriers of structural and systemic racism plaguing our schools and education system. Ricardo Flores Magon Academy serves a primarily multilingual BIPOC population and is a shining example of the power of collective action, unity, and community decision-making. Zak is a Colorado League of Charter Schools Ambassadors Cohort and Legislative Liaison Program member and is pursuing his Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy from the University of Colorado.

Daniyal Hussain, Student, Albuquerque, New Mexico

High school senior Daniyal Hussain from Cottonwood Classical Preparatory School is a remarkable advocate who started an advocacy club at his school as a graduate of the Rising Leaders Initiative Class of 2022-23. Daniyal has successfully advocated for important bills in the New Mexico State Legislature and presented at 50Can New Mexico on a student panel as part of the program. His advocacy even helped secure funding for IB testing in New Mexico. Daniyal's ambitions extend to college, where he plans to study political science and public policy, become a legislator, and continue his advocacy efforts for causes he is passionate about.

Julia Rivera-Tapia, Parent and Administrator at J. Paul Taylor Academy, Las Cruces, New Mexico

Julia Rivera-Tapia is a dedicated parent in the New Mexico charter school community. She has consistently demonstrated unwavering commitment, passion, and advocacy for students, families, and school staff. Her tireless efforts have led to improved communication channels, increased parental involvement, and a stronger sense of community within J. Paul Taylor Academy. She actively engages with school leadership, teachers, and fellow parents to ensure

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that all school communication is offered in Spanish as well as English. Julia emphatically leads the Equity Council and works to ensure that every student receives the support they need to thrive. Whether it's advocating for additional resources, addressing safety concerns, or promoting mental health awareness, she champions initiatives that directly benefit our children.

Eric Pettigrew, Former State Lawmaker, Seattle, Washington

Eric Pettigrew has decades of experience in public service. From 2003 to 2021, he represented the residents of Washington's 37th legislative district in the State House of Representatives, including 10 years as Caucus Chair. During his tenure, he championed charter schools, including increased funding. Eric believes charter schools provide a great complement to traditional public schools, especially for students of color. Since leaving office, Eric has continued his advocacy for charter schools, urging lawmakers to ensure all students across Washington state have access to a public school that meets their needs, including passing legislation to ensure charter public schools receive funding equal to other public schools.

Cheryl Stahle, Academic Administrator, West Virginia Virtual Academy, Parkersburg, West Virginia

Cheryl Stahle is West Virginia Virtual Academy's academic administrator, and a former teacher and professor with hands-on experience in both physical and virtual classrooms across the state. She holds administrative experience in program design, schoolwide positive behavior initiatives, and teacher development. Through her unwavering commitment and tireless efforts, Cheryl has significantly contributed to raising awareness and fostering appreciation for the remarkable charter school expansion work happening throughout the state. She consistently shines a spotlight on the positive aspects of charter schools in West Virginia, especially the virtual schools through media campaigns and community events. Cheryl has played a pivotal role in fostering connections and partnerships that have led to increased support and recognition for West Virginia Virtual Academy's initiatives, such as the school's partnership with Pierpont Community and Technical College offering student's dual enrollment.

Dr. Chris Her-Xiong, founder and executive director of Hmong American Peace Academy, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin

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Dr. Chris Her-Xiong is the Chief Executive Officer of the Hmong American Peace Academy, a college preparatory K4-12 grade public charter school and treasurer of the Wisconsin Charter School Association. Dr. Her-Xiong has shaped education and inspired children in Milwaukee over her 34 years with Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), as a teacher, principal, and now Chief Executive Officer of the Hmong American Peace Academy (HAPA), a high-performing and award-winning school serving nearly 1,900 scholars. When she was hired by MPS in 1990, she was its first Hmong bilingual teacher. She watched as her Hmong students faced the same identity crisis that she had gone through and that fueled her advocacy efforts to provide them a place to be able to embrace their culture, while also having many choices in life. This is what led her to create the Hmong American Peace Academy, an MPS charter school and the first Hmong public charter school in Wisconsin. It celebrates Hmong heritage, rigorous academics, character development and a community peace program preparing them to excel in colleges, universities, and careers. HAPA is transformational for our scholars, our families, our community and our city. Dr. Her-Xiong has been honored by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation for her inspirational leadership and was a Milwaukee Business Journal Woman of Influence. She was a member of Gov. Tony Evers' Personnel Advisory Council to help refer potential candidates for key state positions. Dr. Her-Xiong was the recipient of the Lifetime Award by College Possible in the spring of 2023.

SHARE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Join us in spreading the word during National Charter Schools Week about why we fight every day for our students and schools.

- Use our [social media graphics](#) throughout the week
- Make sure to use #CharterSchoolsWeek and/or #WeAreCharter in your social posts
- Use our social media language or make up your own!
 - Join me in celebrating National #CharterSchoolsWeek 2024! Raise your voice for the 8,000 schools and nearly 4M students who attend them this week and every week #WeAreCharter
 - We are more than educators, leaders, students, and schools. We are a movement. And we are growing. #CharterSchoolsWeek #WeAreCharter
 - We are louder together! Stand strong with a growing movement for choice in public education #CharterSchoolsWeek #WeAreCharter

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SUBSCRIBE TO GET SCHOOLED

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools' podcast [Get Schooled on Public Education](#) is back. The podcast covers topics such as funding, curriculum, teacher development, student learning needs, parental demand, and more. We're kicking off season two with a special National Charter Schools Week episode dedicated to raising our voices to advocate for more students to have access to a free, high-quality public education. Also in this episode, you'll learn more about our 2024 changemakers and hear directly from our youngest changemaker, Daniyal Hussain.

ATTEND IN PERSON

Join us in Washington, D.C., or online for the official national event as we celebrate our movement and lift up just a few of our leading voices.

- **What:** National Charter Schools Week 2024 event and panel honoring seven Changemakers who raise their voices for charter schools
- **When:** May 15, 2024, 11:00 a.m. ET
- **Where:** 2007 Rayburn House Office Building- The Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee Room

Watch via live stream on the [National Alliance Facebook page](#).

MEET THE PRESS

Make sure to share with your local media who would love to hear about the celebration! We've made it easy with our ready-to-go templates.

Media Advisory

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For Immediate Release

[Month and day], 2024

Media Contact: [Name of communications liaison], [title], [name of public charter school] [phone number] | [email address]

MEDIA ADVISORY

[Name of Charter School] to Celebrate National Charter Schools Week [Local event highlighted in subhead]

On [day of week], [month, day] [Name of charter school] will celebrate National Charter Schools Week, taking place May 12-18. In honor of the nationwide celebration, [name of charter school] will host [name of activity], to commemorate the week and elevate the passionate community administrators, teachers, and students that lead, work, and learn at [name of charter school].

WHO: [Name of charter school]

WHAT: [Provide a brief 1-3 sentence description of the event or activity. Be sure to include details, the reach of the activity, and list any notable names that will be in attendance, especially if there is an opportunity for them to speak to the reporter.]

WHEN: [day of week], [month, day] at [time]

WHERE: [Name of charter school] | [street address of school]

RSVP: Media covering the event must register with [name] at [email address]

[City's/State's] charter school movement—which serves XX students across XX schools—exemplifies the sector's commitment to providing families with high-quality public school options, implementing innovative schools that put students' needs first, and achieving

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strong academic results for kids. Public charter schools are independent, public, and tuition-free schools that are given the freedom to be more innovative while being held accountable for advancing student achievement. Since the first charter school law was enacted in 1991, nearly four million students attend 8,000 charter schools across the United States. Charter schools like [name of charter school] provide a local high-quality public school option to [city's] students.

About [Name of charter school] [Insert boilerplate language if desired]

###

Press Release Template - General

Raise Your Voice for Public Education during National Charter Schools Week – May 12-18, 2023

[ENTER ORGANIZATION] will celebrate National Charter Schools Week from May 12-18, 2024 to honor the 8,000 public charter schools, 251,000 dedicated teachers, and hundreds of lawmakers who serve and advocate for nearly 4 million students each day. In partnership with the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools and the public charter school community nationwide, this week-long celebration encourages everyone to raise their voice for high-quality public education options for all children.

[ADD STATE- or LOCAL-SPECIFIC INFORMATION AND STATS]

[ENTER CSO OR PARTNER QUOTE]

Public charter schools are an important part of the public education community. These unique public schools serve nearly four million learners—nearly 70% students of color and 59% eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. [CREDO](#)'s 2023 National Charter School Study found that

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Black students in charter schools gained an additional 35 days of learning in reading and 29 days of learning in math, while Hispanic students attending charter schools saw an additional 30 days of growth in reading and 19 more days in math. Low-income Hispanic students gained 30 additional days of learning in math and 36 additional days of learning in reading, while low-income Black students gained 36 additional days of learning in math and 37 additional days of learning in reading per year compared to their district school peers. The [U.S. News & World Report](#) found that 21 of the top 100 best high schools are charter schools, despite charter schools only making up 7.9% of public schools.

“Let’s raise our collective voice to celebrate National Charter Schools Week and advocate for public education options for all. This week is a meaningful opportunity to bring our community together and celebrate the accomplishments of our students, teachers, parents, activists, and legislators who make charter schools’ success possible.” - Quote from National Alliance.

Charter schools are the only part of public education that is steadily growing. Over the last four school years (2019-20 to 2022-23), [charter schools gained](#) more than 300,000 new students, an increase of 9%. Meanwhile, district public schools lost 1.5 million students at the beginning of the pandemic and enrollment has not rebounded over the past three years, creating a net loss of 3.5%. Where there is space, families want seats in charter schools.

[ENTER BOILERPLATE]

###

Press Release Template - Changemakers OR Special recognition in your state

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[ENTER ORGANIZATION] Celebrates [ENTER AWARD RECIPIENT] Who Received Annual [CHANGEMAKER AWARD] From The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools

The Changemaker Award honors individuals who are making an outsized difference in public education and their communities

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools honored [ENTER RECIPIENT] with [ENTER AWARD]. This annual award honors individuals making an exceptional difference in their charter schools and their community, who go above and beyond to shape their students' lives for the better, and who advocate for policies that will enable public charter schools to thrive.

[ENTER QUOTE FROM Changemaker/other Honoree]

[ENTER PERSONAL INFORMATION ON RECIPIENT].

[ENTER QUOTE FROM CSO]

[MORE PERSONAL INFORMATION ON RECIPIENT]

Information on all 2024 Changemakers can be found at publiccharters.org. Further, in celebration of National Charter Schools Week, all 2024 honorees will speak at an event on Capitol Hill on Wednesday, May 15, and share their stories and experiences in charter schools. For more event information, contact jennifer@publiccharters.org.

[ENTER BOILERPLATE]

###

Op-Ed Guidelines

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WHAT IS AN OP-ED?

An Op-Ed (opinion editorial) is a prose piece typically published by a newspaper or magazine that expresses the opinion of the author. Typically, an Op-Ed is intended to convince its readers of a specific position.

HOW TO PUBLISH AN OP-ED

Most publications—whether print or exclusively online—have clear guidance for submitting op-eds on their website. This includes how long they should be (word count), what email address to send to, etc. When in doubt, Googling “how to submit op-ed to [your publication]” should do the trick.

WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT AN OP-ED?

Many outlets take a few days to consider an op-ed for publication—should they accept it, it could be a few more days before anything is “live.” While some outlets move more quickly, it’s always good to build in several days before your desired run date. To pack the most punch for National Charter Schools Week, your Op-Ed should run anywhere from May 7-13—meaning it will be ideal to pitch a week prior, roughly May 1-6.

WHAT MAKES A GREAT OP-ED?

Be brief and get personal. Editors (and readers!) want to hear why this issue matters to you and—even more importantly—to those in your community. Also, a good rule of thumb is this: don’t underestimate your reader’s intelligence, and don’t overestimate your reader’s background knowledge. Don’t dumb things down but do be clear and avoid jargon.

WHAT SHOULD MY OP-ED INCLUDE?

- A lede (hook): Catch the reader’s attention.
- Make your case:
 - Begin with your thesis/main argument
 - Present valid claims + evidence
 - Strongly recommended: Acknowledge and address counterarguments

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- Call-to-action: What should someone who agrees with your persuasive prose do now/next?

WHO SHOULD AUTHOR AN OP-ED?

Op-Eds that come from local leaders, teachers, and families that are closest to the impact and benefit of charter schools are always compelling authors. Policy and advocacy leaders can be compelling if your Op-Ed is focused on legislation or policy decisions being made. Above all else, think local.

INVOLVE LOCAL AND STATE OFFICIALS

Ask your local and state elected officials to issue a proclamation declaring May 12 - 18 as National Charter Schools Week with this template.

WHAT IS A PROCLAMATION?

A proclamation is an official document issued by your governor or local elected official to commemorate National Charter Schools Week in your state or community to raise awareness of the impact charter schools have in your area and to celebrate the accomplishments of charter schools, students, and teachers.

HOW TO REQUEST A PROCLAMATION

Visit your governor/elected official's website—usually, requests are accepted via email, snail mail, or an online form.

WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT A PROCLAMATION?

Please submit your request four weeks before it is needed to allow adequate time for your request to be considered.

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WHAT SHOULD MY REQUEST INCLUDE?

- Information about your organization (most states require or preference requests from in-state organizations so it's important to identify yourself)
- Draft proclamation language using 3-8 whereas statements (you can choose from the samples below or draft your own)
- Information about charter schools in your state. Proclamations should convey significance to a broad group of residents in your state.
- If this is a significant year for charter schools in your state, such as an anniversary year of your state law's passage, include that information.

STATE PROCLAMATION TEMPLATE

WHEREAS, In the 2023-2024 academic year, **XX** new charter schools opened their doors across the state, helping to create new jobs and opportunities for educators and other professionals in **STATE**; and

WHEREAS, Charter schools are free, public, and open to all; and

WHEREAS, Charter schools are public schools that increase learning opportunities for all students and provide families with expanded choices within the public school system; and

WHEREAS, There are **XX** charter schools operating in **STATE**; and

WHEREAS, Charter schools serve more than **XX** students in **STATE**, representing **X** percent of the public school population in the state; and

WHEREAS, In **XXXX**, **STATE** was the **XX** state in the nation to establish charter schools; and

WHEREAS, Charter schools serve as beacons of innovation and produce effective models of education, of significance to all public schools; and

- Where there is space, families want seats in charter schools.
- American parents across the political spectrum are broadly supportive of charters: 73% of parents with school-aged children expressed their approval of charter schools in a recent poll and 93% agree that one size does not fit all in education, according to a recent survey of parents by [The Harris Poll](#).
- **Charter schools are student-centered and can serve the unique needs of each of their communities in ways that district public schools cannot.**
 - In exchange for local autonomy regarding students' education and wrap-around services, charter schools must meet or exceed the goals laid out in their charter such as student proficiency and community service.
 - Families choose public charter schools in part because they are often run by community leaders and former teachers who want the autonomy to make decisions to best meet the unique needs of their students and their families.

WHEREAS, Many charter schools are designed specifically to serve children from traditionally underserved communities; and

WHEREAS, Charter schools have made dramatic gains in accelerating the closing of the achievement gap for those underserved populations, increasing the graduation rate and improving college readiness; and

WHEREAS, Charter schools offer a variety of learning environments and emphases, including college preparedness, career technical education, arts, and sciences; and

WHEREAS, Charter schools play an integral role in **STATE's** public education system, the communities in which they operate, the families they serve, and the students' lives they impact; and

WHEREAS, by providing high-quality education to students, charter schools contribute to the statewide effort to improve education in **XX**; and

WHEREAS, charter schools encourage community and parental involvement in the education of our youth; and

WHEREAS, the State of **XXX** joins the **STATE ASSOCIATION** in celebrating the accomplishments and contributions of charter schools to public education; and

WHEREAS, Charter Schools Week is celebrated across the country by millions of students, parents, educators, leaders, schools, and organizations to raise awareness of these unique public schools; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, **First Name Last Name**, Governor of the State of **XX**, do hereby proclaim May 12-18, 2024, as **STATE** CHARTER SCHOOLS WEEK in **State** and commend its observance to all citizens.