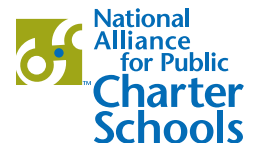


AN ANALYSIS OF THE CHARTER SCHOOL FACILITY LANDSCAPE IN DELAWARE

JANUARY 2018



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THESE MATERIALS HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED FOR THE NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL RESOURCE CENTER FUNDED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. THE NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL RESOURCE CENTER IS LED BY SAFAL PARTNERS UNDER CONTRACT NUMBER ED-011-13-C-0065.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IN THE SPRING OF 2016, THE NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL RESOURCE CENTER (NCSRC), the Colorado League of Charter Schools (the League), the Delaware Charter Schools Network (DCSN), and the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (the Alliance) collaborated to collect data and information about charter school facilities and facilities expenditures in the state of Delaware. The data collection in Delaware was supported by the Charter School Facilities Initiative (CSFI), which is a national project developed by the League to research charter school facilities and facilities expenditures across the country.

The CSFI team identified 28 brick and mortar Delaware charter school facilities that were eligible to participate in this project. All 28 eligible charter school facilities completed the Charter School Facilities Survey.¹ The survey methodology used for the report was designed to address Delaware-specific facility and policy related issues, including: shared use information, facility amenities, ownership, financing, grade levels and waiting lists. For more information on survey methodology please see Appendix A.

The information contained in this report is based on the Charter School Facilities Survey and enrollment data collected for the 2015-16 school year.² The policy conclusions are based on the charter school facility landscape in Delaware, the national facility landscape, and the collective expertise of the NCSRC, the League, DCSN, and the Alliance.

In 2015-16, Delaware charter schools served over 14,000 students – or 10.4 percent of the roughly 136,000 public school students statewide.³ In 2015-16, 31 percent of Delaware charter school students were economically disadvantaged and 58 percent belonged to a minority group.⁴

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- 1 The number of charter facilities does not necessarily equal the number of charter schools. For example, some charter schools have multiple campuses operating as one school, such as an elementary and middle school that are not on the same facility site. Also, multiple separate schools may operate in one common facility.
 - 2 Enrollment data was obtained from the Delaware Department of Education.
 - 3 Delaware Department of Education – Charter School Office.
 - 4 Delaware Department of Education – Charter School Office.



Key findings include:

1. Meeting demand for Delaware's charter schools may require new statewide facilities solutions.

- More than 7,700 students were on charter school waitlists in 2015-16.
- 68 percent of charter schools (19/28) planned to grow their enrollment to meet demand over the next five years.
- 43 percent of charter schools (12/28) reported that their current facility does not have space for their expected enrollment in five years.

2. Delaware charter schools spend operating dollars on facilities and this spending varies across different ownership situations.

- Charter schools that rented from private organizations (43 percent or 12/28) paid an average of \$1,545 per pupil.
- Charter schools that owned their building (50 percent or 14/28) paid an average of \$922 per pupil.
- One charter school rented from a school district in 2015-16 and paid \$329 per pupil.
- One charter school was housed by a public university and paid no rent.

3. Delaware charter schools have limited access to state and local facilities funding.

- Delaware does not provide per pupil facilities assistance to charter schools.
- State funding for major capital improvements is not available to charter schools.
- The median charter school reported \$230,000 in total spending on major capital improvements over the past five years.

4. Delaware charter schools have limited access to space in vacant or underutilized district facilities.

- Only one Delaware charter school was located in a district facility in 2015-16.
- 18 percent of charter schools (5/28) reported the presence of a nearby vacant district facility.
- 29 percent of charter schools (8/28) reported the presence of a nearby district facility that was significantly underutilized (30 percent or more unused capacity).

5. Physical education and recreational options may be limited for Delaware charter school students.

- 29 percent of charter schools serving elementary students (4/14) did not have a playground on campus.
- 54 percent of charter schools (15/28) did not have an athletic field on campus.
- 43 percent of charter schools (12/28) did not have a gym on campus.

6. Serving meals can be a challenge for many Delaware charter schools.

- 71 percent of charter schools (20/28) lacked a full-preparatory kitchen facility.
- As a result, 64 percent of charter schools (18/28) purchased meal services from outside caterers (including school districts).

The Charter School Facilities Survey found that Delaware charter schools face challenges in obtaining equitable access to facilities and facilities funding. The Conclusions section further expands on the policy solutions that can be utilized to address the facilities challenges of Delaware's charter schools.

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INTRODUCTION

Charter School Facilities Initiative Background

Since 2011, the League's work through the CSFI has been supported by the U.S. Department of Education's Charter School Program through a subcontract with the NCSRC.⁵ This work is the result of a Task Force launched by the League in 2007.⁶ To date, the League and the CSFI have collected charter school facility data in 17 states. The goal of the CSFI is to encourage public policy and private sector changes leading to a comprehensive, sustainable, and adequate public school facilities system.

The Charter School Facilities Survey (Survey) was developed as a means of collecting reliable charter school facilities data for research and policy development purposes. Over time, the Survey has evolved to account for changes in public school facilities design and construction, charter school financing, and other relevant policy developments and trends. This Survey is customized for use in each participating state to include state-specific questions that capture the local charter school facilities context. For more information on survey methodology please see Appendix A.

Delaware Charter School Law

The Delaware General Assembly passed the first law establishing charter schools in 1995 to "improve student learning; encourage the use of different and innovative or proven school environments and teaching and learning methods; provide parents and students with measures of improved school and student performance and greater opportunities in choosing public schools within and without their school districts; and to provide for a well-educated community."⁷

There are two types of charter authorizers in Delaware – the Delaware Department of Education with the assent of the State Board of Education and local school districts.

5 <http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/>

6 In 2007, the League developed the Colorado Charter School Facilities Survey in partnership with a national leader in school facilities, Paul Hutton, AIA, of Cuningham Group Architecture, and experts in school planning, Wayne Eckerling, Ph.D. and Allen Balczarek.

7 <http://www.delcode.delaware.gov/title14/c005/index.shtml>

Delaware Charter School Overview

In 2015-16, 50 percent of charter schools (14/28) were located in urban areas, 39 percent of charter schools (11/28) were located in suburban areas, and 11 percent of charter schools (3/28) were located in rural areas.

In 2015-16, 14 percent of charter schools (4/28) were managed by non-profit charter management organizations (CMOs) while 86 percent (24/28) operated independently of a CMO.⁸

In 2015-16, 18 percent of charter schools (5/28) served elementary school grades, 7 percent of charter schools (2/28) served middle school grades, 29 percent of charter schools (8/28) served high school grades, 32 percent of charter schools (9/28) served grades K-8, and 14 percent of charter schools (4/28) served grades 6-12.



8 Charter Management Organizations (CMOs) are non-profit entities that manage two or more charter schools. CMOs often provide back office support to help charter schools take advantage of economies of scale, but some also provide a wider range of services – including hiring, professional development, data analysis, public relations and advocacy.

KEY FINDINGS

Key Finding #1: Meeting demand for Delaware’s charter schools may require new facilities solutions.

The demand for charter schools is a nationwide issue. The first charter school law was passed 25 years ago in Minnesota. According to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, between 1992 and 2016, the number of charter schools has gone from zero to nearly 7,000 in 42 states and D.C., enrolling an estimated 3.1 million students. Despite this growth, charter schools comprise less than 7 percent of the 100,000 public schools in the U.S. and only 6 percent of the nearly 50 million public school students. We know that there are not enough charter schools to meet the demand from parents who want to choose them, because each year hundreds of thousands of students end up on wait lists, particularly in urban districts.



More than 7,700 Delaware students remained on charter school waiting lists in 2015-16 – indicating strong demand for Delaware charter schools. The Survey results indicate that a majority of Delaware charter schools plan to grow their enrollment over the next five years in order to meet the demand for additional charter school seats. In addition, many charter schools may need to acquire a new facility or renovate and expand their current facility in order to meet growing demand for charter school seats. Acquiring low cost facility space and accessing funding for facilities to meet the demand is a challenge for charter school operators, and as a result, students wishing to enroll in a Delaware charter school may not have the opportunity.

- **68 percent** of charter schools (19/28) planned to grow their enrollment over the next five years.
- For charter schools that planned to grow, the median school planned to increase their enrollment by **78 percent**.
- **43 percent** of charter schools (12/28) did not have space for their desired enrollment in five years.

Facilities challenges can also impact a charter school's ability to open its doors and serve students. In addition to designing and planning academic and instructional programs, developing staffing plans and meeting federal, state and local operational and governance regulations and requirements, charter school operators must also navigate the increasingly complex arena of facilities. This includes navigating the real estate search and identification process and the zoning, land use, or permitting processes. In addition, charter school operators must also manage major capital projects and obtain renovation funding in order to make nontraditional educational spaces school ready. The Delaware survey results indicate that these challenges have prevented charter schools from opening their doors as scheduled.

- Prior to their first year in operation, **25 percent** of charter schools (7/28) had to delay their opening date due to facilities-related issues such as financing, acquisition of property or land, construction, or the lack of available facilities in the desired geographic area.

Additional funds, creative financing, and facility access solutions may be needed to address facilities-related issues as the Delaware charter school student population continues to grow.

In addition, ninety-three percent of Delaware charter schools (13/14) serving elementary students did not serve pre-kindergarten students; however, all 13 of these schools reported an interest in serving pre-kindergarten students if Delaware law was changed and charter schools could receive state funding for these students.

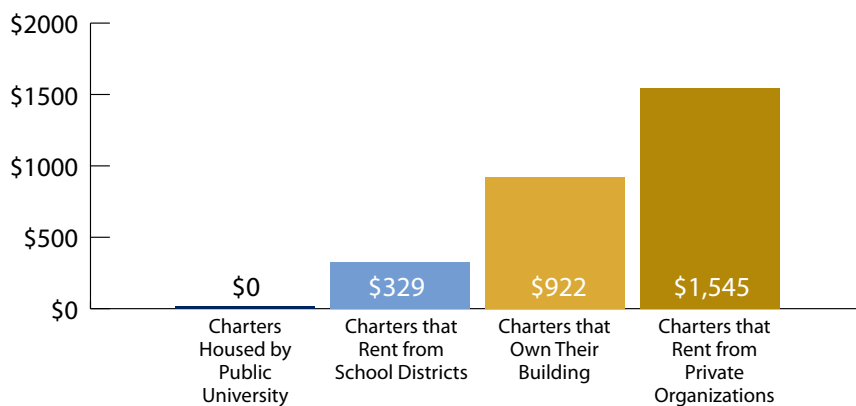
Key Finding #2: Delaware charter schools spend operating dollars on facilities and this spending varies across different ownership situations.

In 2015-16, 43 percent of charter schools (12/28) rented from private organizations, 50 percent of charter schools (14/28) owned their building, one charter school was located in a school district facility, and one charter school was housed by a public university.

The median Delaware charter school received \$12,337 in Per Pupil Revenue in 2014-15.⁹ On average, Delaware charter schools reported facilities expenses of \$1,135 per pupil in 2015-16. The amount being spent, however, varied depending on the type of entity that owned the facility:

- Charter schools that rented from private organizations (43 percent or 12/28) paid an average of \$1,545 per pupil.
- Charter schools that owned their building (50 percent or 14/28) paid an average of \$922 per pupil.
- The only charter school in Delaware that rented from a school district paid \$329 per pupil.
- The only charter school in Delaware that was housed by a public university paid no rent.

Figure 1
Average Facilities Expenditures by Ownership Type



9 Based on Delaware "School Profile" information the median charter school received \$12,337 in 2014-15 (<http://profiles.doe.k12.de.us/schoolprofiles/District/Charter.aspx?checkSchool=0&districtCode=-1&district=Charter>). Official 2015-16 Per Pupil Revenue data was not available at the time this analysis was conducted.

Key Finding #3: Delaware charter schools have limited access to state and local facilities funding.

Delaware does not provide per pupil facilities assistance to charter schools to offset facilities costs. However, 89 percent of Delaware charter schools had rental or financing payments for their facility in 2015-16.

Delaware charter schools are not provided access to state and local facilities funding in the same manner as other Delaware public schools. In addition, Delaware charter schools are unable to obtain access to state or local facilities funding related to major capital improvements or capital referendums.

The only source of state facilities funding for Delaware charter schools is the Charter School Performance Fund (Fund). As of 2015-16, Delaware charter schools had received \$2.5 million from the Fund. However, Delaware statute states that up to \$5 million can be appropriated to the Fund on an annual basis.

- The median charter school reported \$230,000 in total spending on major capital improvements over the past five years.
- **39 percent** of charter schools (11/28) were located in school districts that have passed a capital referendum in the last five years; however, these funds represent the local share for specific facilities projects put forth by the district and are not shared with charter schools.

Key Finding #4: Delaware charter schools struggle to obtain space in vacant and underutilized district facilities.

Utilizing district facilities is a much more economical option for charter schools than renting from non-profit or for-profit organizations. In addition, non-district rental space is rarely designed for school use and often requires significant modifications or renovations in order to implement a specific educational model. In fact, 36 percent of charter schools (10/28) reported that their facility did not have the ideal amenities, nor desired specialized classrooms, to best implement their educational model.

Locating in a district facility generally provides many advantages such as: full kitchen facilities, lunchroom and auditorium spaces, designated specialized instructional spaces, grade appropriate indoor and outdoor recreational spaces, and appropriate drop-off and pick-up areas. Despite the major advantages of locating in a district facility, only one Delaware charter school was located in a district facility in 2015-16. However, 18 percent of charter schools (5/28) reported the presence of a nearby district facility that was vacant. In addition, 29 percent of charter schools (8/28) reported the presence of a nearby district facility that was significantly underutilized (more than 30 percent unused capacity).

Due to the lack of access to vacant and underutilized school district facilities, and in some communities, a lack of available facilities entirely, charter schools must be creative in the facilities process. Charter schools are often located in nontraditional spaces such as: office buildings, churches, strip malls, former big box stores and other unique spaces. This is true nationally, as well as in Delaware. In 2015-16, 46 percent of Delaware charter schools (13/28) were located in facilities that were not originally constructed as a school. Charter schools locating in a non-district facility may be required to overcome significant challenges, including navigating the zoning, land use, or permitting processes – as well as the renovation cost needed to make these nontraditional spaces school ready. These renovations can prove especially challenging for Delaware charter schools – given their lack of access to major capital improvement funds.

Key Finding #5: Physical education and recreational options may be limited for Delaware charter school students.

Physical education options may be limited for Delaware charter school students – due to a lack of dedicated indoor facility amenities and outdoor spaces. Although the majority of Delaware charter schools serving elementary students reported the presence of a playground (71 percent or 10/14), many Delaware charter schools reported that their facility did not have a gymnasium or an athletic field on campus. While it is true that not all public schools have the need for a full range of athletic facilities – for some charter schools – the lack of these amenities may make it harder to offer a variety of physical education programs and organized athletic activities for their students.

- **54 percent** of charter schools (15/28) did not have an athletic field on campus.
- **43 percent** of charter schools (12/28) did not have a gym on campus.
- **18 percent** of charter schools (5/28) did not offer competitive sports programs.



Key Finding #6: Serving meals can be a challenge for many Delaware charter schools.

Kitchen facilities are commonly considered a given in traditional public school buildings. However, kitchen facilities are an amenity that many charter schools do without. This is because adding a federally-compliant kitchen is often cost prohibitive when a charter school is building a new school facility or utilizing a nontraditional facility that has been converted into functional educational space. In Delaware, with only one charter school in a district facility in 2015-16, the vast majority of charter schools have had to address this issue.

While 93 percent of charter schools (26/28) had either a dedicated lunchroom or a combination lunchroom, like a cafetorium, 7 percent of charter schools (2/28) had no lunchroom space at all. Further, a majority of Delaware charter schools (71 percent or 20/28) did not have a full-preparatory kitchen in which to prepare hot meals that qualify for reimbursement under the National School Lunch Program. As a result, charter schools that participate in the federally subsidized meal program regularly provide food services by using contracted caterers – which often has additional costs. Sixty-four percent of charter schools in Delaware (18/28) reported that they met this need by purchasing meals from compliant external catering companies (including school districts). These outside service vendors often cost more than the federally subsidized reimbursement rate. Charter schools must find other ways of covering this additional expense, either through operating funds or outside resources.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND FINDINGS

Specialized Instructional Spaces

Most instruction during the school day takes place in general classrooms; however, specialized instructional spaces – such as art rooms, music rooms and libraries – are an important part of a comprehensive educational program. Delaware charter schools often have a limited number of these types of spaces. In fact, only 64 percent of Delaware charter schools (18/28) reported that their facility had the ideal amenities and desired specialized classrooms to best implement their educational program.

- **39 percent** of charter schools (11/28) did not have a dedicated art room.
- **36 percent** of charter schools (10/28) did not have a dedicated library/media center.
- **36 percent** of charter schools (10/28) did not have a dedicated music room.
- **11 percent** of charter schools (3/28) reported that the installation of sufficient broadband to access high-quality digital content was a major challenge.

Being innovative with space is a hallmark of the charter sector, thus, charter schools frequently utilize alternative locations to provide specialized programming. Administrators and teachers continuously strive to generate optimal educational experiences for their students across a range of curriculum areas including art, music, science, and technology. For many charter schools, however, tailoring space exclusively for specific instructional purposes can be cost prohibitive.



School Environment

Studies conducted by Uline and Tschannen-Moran,¹⁰ Tanner,¹¹ Nielson and Zimmerman,¹² and Lumpkin¹³ demonstrate a link between the quality of the physical environment within a school facility and students' educational outcomes. Facility characteristics that are believed to have an impact on student learning are: windows and lighting, thermal comfort, acoustics, and indoor air quality. The Survey asked Delaware charter school leaders to rate the physical environment of their school. Many of the schools reported deficiencies with the quality of the school facility and a belief that those deficiencies negatively impact the learning environment for their students.

- **29 percent** of charter schools (8/28) reported that noise generated in other classrooms or corridors was disruptive to learning.
- **25 percent** of charter schools (7/28) reported that classroom temperatures were not reasonably comfortable throughout the school year.
- **18 percent** of charter schools (5/28) reported that they did not have insulated (thermal pane) windows.
- **11 percent** of charter schools (3/28) reported that the school has experienced air quality problems.

10 Cynthia Uline and Megan Tschannen-Moran, (2008) "The walls speak: the interplay of quality facilities, school climate, and student achievement," *Journal of Educational Administration*, Vol. 46 Issue: 1, pp. 55–73.

11 C. Kenneth Tanner, (2009) "Effects of school design on student outcomes," *Journal of Educational Administration*, Vol. 47 Issue: 3, pp. 381–399.

12 Christopher Nielson and Seth Zimmerman, (2014) "The effect of school construction on test scores, school enrollment, and home prices," *Journal of Public Economics*, Vol 120, pp. 18-31.

13 Ronald B. Lumpkin, (2013) "School Facility Condition and Academic Outcomes," *International Journal of Facility Management*, Vol. 4, No. 3.

CONCLUSIONS

Due to demonstrated student and community demand, 68 percent of Delaware charter schools (19/28) reported that they plan to increase their enrollment over the next five years. Meeting this demand with the current facilities situation will be difficult, as 43 percent of Delaware charter schools (12/28) reported utilizing buildings that are not adequate for their planned enrollment in five years. Only one Delaware charter school was utilizing a district facility in 2015-16. However, 18 percent of charter schools (5/28) reported the presence of a nearby district facility that was vacant. In addition, 29 percent of charter schools (8/28) reported the presence of a nearby district facility that was significantly underutilized (more than 30 percent unused capacity). Charter schools in Delaware are addressing the limited access to traditional school facilities by locating in nontraditional spaces. In 2015-16, 46 percent of Delaware charter schools (13/28) were located in structures that were not originally designed to be a school.

Attaining facilities equity between Delaware's charter schools and its traditional public schools will require both legislative initiatives and funding models to support the expenses required for acquisition and renovation. By helping charter schools meet their facilities challenges, Delaware lawmakers will enable charter schools to better serve their students by allocating more operational dollars toward core educational outcomes – rather than directing these critical funds to the continual economic demands of facility modification and improvement.

Delaware currently provides some facilities support to charter schools. However, there is no single way to resolve the facilities challenges that Delaware charter schools face. A report by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools entitled “*A New Model Law for Supporting the Growth of High-Quality Public Charter Schools*”¹⁴ provides a menu of solutions that can be considered to help mitigate these challenges:

1. **A per pupil facilities allowance that annually reflects actual average district capital costs.**
2. **A state grant program for charter school facilities.**
3. **A state loan program for charter school facilities.**
4. **Equal access to tax-exempt bonding authorities or allowing charter schools to have their own bonding authority.**
5. **A mechanism to provide credit enhancement for charter schools.**
6. **Equal access to existing facilities funding programs available to traditional public schools.**
7. **Right of refusal to purchase or lease at or below fair market value a closed, unused, or underused public school facility or property.**
8. **Prohibition of facility-related requirements that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools.**



14 http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/ModelLaw_P7-wCVR_20110402T222341.pdf

Not all of these solutions are equal in their importance. The most important solutions are those that provide revenue directly to charter schools for their facilities expenses. Points #1, #2, and #6 provide facility revenue options for Delaware to consider. While not as critical as revenue, the other policy solutions listed above (#3, #4, #5, #7, and #8) may prove helpful to Delaware charter schools and should also be seriously considered. It is important to note that the states that have helped charter schools the most with their facilities challenges are those that have enacted both revenue and non-revenue related policies.

According to a January 2016 report by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools entitled *"Measuring Up to the Model: A Ranking of State Charter School Laws, Seventh Edition"*¹⁵ (which analyzes and ranks each state's public charter school law against the Model Law), Delaware law addresses some of the facilities components in the Model Law:

- Delaware law requires the Delaware Department of Education to administer a performance fund for charter schools, to be known as the "Charter School Performance Fund." It requires the department to establish threshold eligibility requirements for applicants desiring to apply for funding, which must include but not be limited to a proven track record of success, as measured by a performance framework established by the charter school's authorizer or comparable measures as defined by the department. It also requires the department to establish criteria to evaluate applications for funding, which must include but not be limited to the availability of supplemental funding from non-state sources at a ratio to be determined by the department. The law requires the department to prioritize those applications from applicants that have developed high-quality plans for start-up or expansion or serve high-need students, as defined by the department. The law provides that the fund shall be subject to appropriation and shall not exceed \$5 million annually. In 2016-17, there was \$0 in this fund.
- Delaware law provides that charter schools are eligible to access tax-exempt bond financing through the Delaware Economic Development Authority and have access to the tax-exempt bond market through the counties in which they reside. It also provides that charter schools have the same access to conduit bond financing as any other nonprofit organization and that no state or local government unit may impose any condition or restriction on a charter school's approval solely because the applicant is a charter school.

15 http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Model-Law-Final_2016.pdf



- State law requires the Delaware Department of Education and Department of Administrative Services to publish a list of all vacant and unused buildings and portions of buildings owned by the state or school districts that may be suitable for charter schools. Delaware law also provides that school districts must make unused buildings or space in buildings available for charter schools and must bargain in good faith over the cost of rent, services, and maintenance related to such space. However, despite the law, charter schools still struggle with access to district managed facilities. According to the Delaware Charter Schools Network, in the last two decades only a few district managed facility spaces have been deemed available for charter school use. The statute lacks an enforcement mechanism that would allow efficient implementation.
- The law provides that the state shall fund minor capital improvements at charter schools in the same manner as the state funds such improvements at vocational technical school districts.

Delaware could better support the demand and anticipated growth of its charter school sector over the next few years by focusing on the following components:

- **Provide direct funding to charter schools for their facilities costs.** One option is to provide a per-pupil facilities allowance that annually reflects actual average district capital costs. For example, Washington D.C. provides charter schools with approximately \$3,177 per-pupil for facilities. A second option is to appropriate the full amount of funding allowed under Delaware law to the Charter School Performance Fund every fiscal year.
- **Provide loans to charter schools for their facilities costs.** One option is to create a state loan program for charter school facilities. For example, Utah law provides a charter school revolving loan fund that provides loans to charter schools for the costs of constructing, renovating, and purchasing charter school facilities. This fund is capitalized at \$6,000,000.

- **Enhance charter school access to bonds.** Delaware law provides that charter schools are eligible for tax-exempt financing through multiple pathways. One option for enhancing charter school access to financing would be for the state to directly allocate a certain amount of bond financing for charter schools. For example, Connecticut has provided \$20 million in bond financing to support charter school facilities, dispersed through a competitive application process.
- **Create a mechanism to provide credit enhancement for charter school facilities.** Colorado, for example, provides a mechanism for limited credit enhancement for eligible, highly-rated bond transactions for charter schools by using the state's moral obligation to back up to \$500 million in debt. In addition, Texas allows high-performing, open-enrollment charter schools that have an investment grade rating and that meet certain financial criteria to apply to have their bonds guaranteed by the Permanent School Fund. Such backing will result in charter bonds being backed by the full faith and credit of the state, putting charter schools on par with school districts and allowing them to achieve AAA ratings.
- **Improve access to surplus district and other public space.** Facilities legislation to provide charter schools access to district and other public space should include both transparency mechanisms and levers available for efficient implementation of the law. Delaware law currently includes some of these provisions, most notably a transparent process that provides access to information via a published list of all vacant and unused buildings and portions of buildings owned by the state or school districts that may be suitable for charter schools. The law could be improved to include levers of accountability that a charter school could use to enforce access to the available space. Additionally, while the law states that both parties must bargain in good faith for the terms of use, reducing the burden of bargaining by creating limits to the cost a charter school must pay to use the space would likely create greater access to these available spaces that have been paid for by tax-payer dollars to benefit all public school students in the district. Indiana law, like Delaware, provides transparency via a list of district managed facilities that may be available for charter school use. Indiana law builds on this transparency to offer greater access to facilities to charter schools by allowing a charter school that wishes to use a school building on the list the option to lease the building for a \$1 a year for a term at the charter school's discretion or to buy the building from the school district at a cost of \$1.

The results of the Survey indicate that Delaware charter schools face challenges in obtaining equitable access to facilities and facilities funding. Ensuring facilities equity for all Delaware public schools would directly benefit the students attending charter schools by allowing them to widen programming options, optimize educational experiences, and increase the number of available quality seats to meet growing demand.

APPENDIX A

Survey Methodology

All eligible Delaware charter schools were asked to complete the Charter School Facilities Survey (Survey). Although the Survey was carefully constructed to obtain data about a broad range of charter school facility related issues in Delaware – it was not designed to address each and every possible issue faced by charter schools in their search for high-quality and affordable facilities. DCSN led the data collection effort and provided supplemental data, as necessary. Additional enrollment and demographics data was obtained from the Delaware Department of Education. Survey data was collected between March and May of 2016. As necessary, DCSN and the CSFI team provided technical assistance to schools completing the Survey and each Survey was reviewed for accuracy and completeness.

The original version of the Survey was created by the League’s facility task force, League staff, and others with expertise in school construction and education policy. Further revisions to the Survey have been made based on feedback from all participating charter schools and charter support organizations. The Survey administered in Delaware was revised through a collaborative effort of DCSN and the League to address Delaware-specific facility and policy-related issues.

Topics addressed include the following:

- Grades served, year of inception, and waiting lists;
- Future facility plans;
- Shared use information;
- Facility age and information technology resources;
- Facility ownership, financing, and annual payments;
- Facility amenities such as gymnasiums, lunchrooms, libraries, and playgrounds; and
- Facility adequacy, condition, and maintainability.

Charter School Facilities Initiative: An Analysis of the Charter School Facility Landscape in Delaware, was prepared by the National Charter School Resource Center, the Colorado League of Charter Schools and the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools on behalf of the Delaware Charter Schools Network.

Additional copies of this report can be obtained by contacting the Delaware Charter Schools Network, the Colorado League of Charter Schools, the National Charter School Resource Center, or the Charter School Facilities Initiative. Please visit the Charter School Facilities Initiative website at www.facilitiesinitiative.org to obtain additional state reports, additional information on data presented in this report, or for general charter school facilities questions.