



Idaho Charter School Network



Image: Treasure Valley Classical Academy, Fruitland

Testimony to the Idaho Senate Education Committee

January 17, 2023

Terry Ryan, CEO – Bluum
Board Chair – Idaho Charter School Network



WE BELIEVE

A robust choice of learning opportunities helps children, families and educators achieve more and do better.

Federalism – the dispersal of central authority – is a crucial tenet of American liberty. The spirit of federalism is needed more than ever in American Education.



WE ARE COMMITTED

To ensuring that Idaho's children reach their fullest potential by cultivating great leaders, replicating high-performing school models, and taking risks to develop new approaches so all Idaho students have access to a great education.



BLUUM STRIVES TO

- Empower and support educational leaders who take risks and put children first;
- Grow and replicate high-impact school models;
- Provide school support and management help;
- Develop and share effective practices; and
- Demonstrate measurable impact program-wide and across individual partner schools.

Image: Gem Prep: Nampa

Public Charter Schools – The Big Idea

- As far back as the 1970s the University of Massachusetts-Amherst education professor Ray Budde proposed letting teachers create semi-autonomous schools that would combine enhanced teacher **freedom and flexibilities with stringent accountability for student results**. His 1988 book, *Education Charter: Restructuring School Districts*, Budde outlined his plan for what would from then on be known as “**charter schools**.”
- Minnesota was the first state to approve a charter school law. Ember Reichgott Junge, the Democratic state senator who crafted Minnesota’s law argued, “**the purpose of the chartering legislation was to give freedom to parents and teacher to create new schools outside the existing system**.” Minnesota’s first charter opened its doors in 1992. Other states quickly followed suit: California, Colorado, Georgia, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Mexico, and Wisconsin had all approved charter legislation by late 1993.
- Passing Idaho Charter School Legislation was a multi-year fight in the 1990s. Opponents used fear and argued public charters are “**a step closer to using public funds for private schools**.”
- Idaho passed its first charter school law in 1997. The state’s first school opened its doors in 1998. The Idaho Public Charter School Commission was approved in 2004 as a statewide authorizer. **All of these gains took political courage.**
- The Legislative intent of Idaho’s charter school program was “**to serve as learning laboratories with hope that success could potentially applied throughout the larger public education system**.”
- Early charter school pioneers include Moscow Charter, Anser Charter School (Garden City), Coeur d’ Alene Charter Academy, Idaho Virtual Academy, Liberty Charter School, North Star Charter School, White Pine Charter School and Pocatello Community Charter School.

Public Charter Schools in Idaho

- Idaho's public charter schools are public schools defined and held accountable thru **Idaho Education Laws and Rules Chapter 52**.
- All Idaho public charter schools are **public**. Overenrolled charter schools must conduct a public lottery to determine enrollment.
- All Idaho charter schools are **required to hold a performance certificate** (charter) with a state approved authorizer. **Eligible authorizers** include the Idaho Public Charter School Commission, public school districts and Idaho public colleges, universities and community colleges.
- Performance certificates are a fixed-term, renewable certificate, between an authorizer and a charter school board of trustees that outlines the **roles, powers, responsibilities and performance expectations** for each party to the certificate. As of 12-1-22, The Idaho Public Charter School Commission authorizes **60 Charters and Districts Authorized 16 Schools**.
- The typical performance certificate is **over 100 pages** and covers issues related to school governance, educational program, authorizer roles and responsibilities, school operations, school finance, termination, non-renewal and revocation, and compliance.
- Idaho public charter schools **must comply with all federal and state rules and regulations** as it relates to special education, testing requirements and financial accounting and reporting. Charters are open enrollment and serve all students. Charter schools **receive no local tax dollars for facilities or school operations**.
- Charter schools operate in a market. **If students do not show up money doesn't either**. In contrast to traditional district schools, **charters that fail close**.



Image: Graduates from NI STEM (Rathdrum)

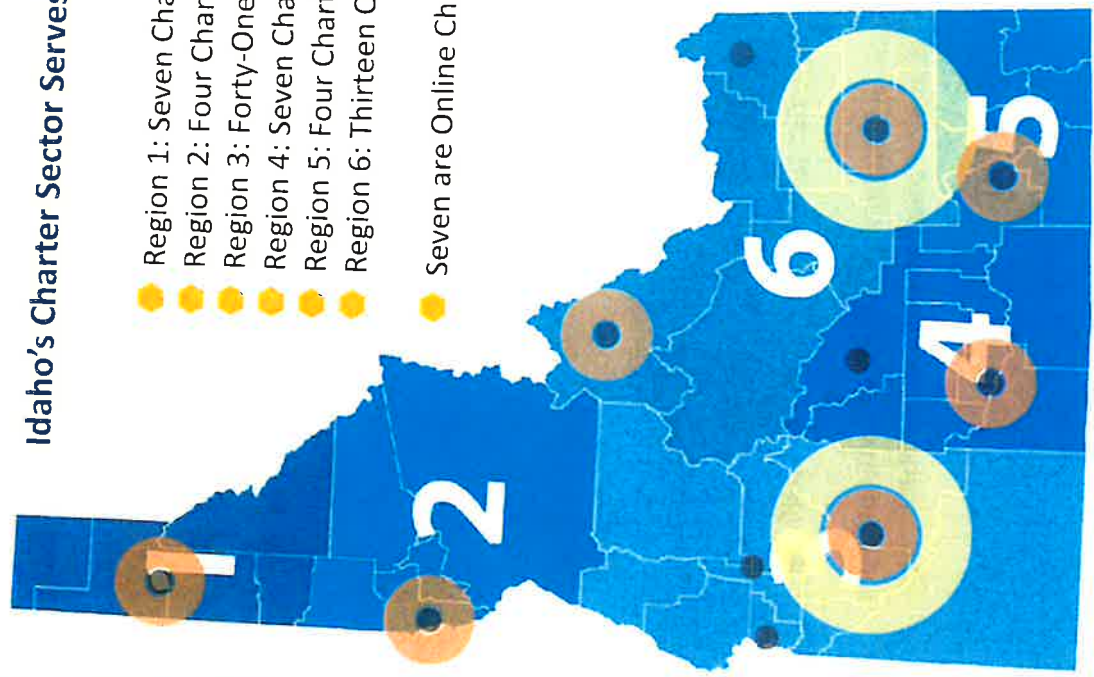
Public Charter Schools in Idaho (The struggle for operational freedoms and fair funding)

The Idaho Legislature has been a **strong supporter** of Public Charter Schools and have worked over the last decade to create more flexibilities for schools and to help with facility financing. This includes legislation that:

- **(2012)** removed the growth cap of six new public charter schools per year and the cap of one new, public charter school per district per year. Also created a per pupil facility allowance, charter schools received \$398 per student in FY 2022.
- **(2016)** allowed public charter schools to sign administrators and teachers to one-year contracts.
- **(2017)** streamlined the charter petition (approval) process, particularly for replicating schools.
- **(2019)** created a charter school administrator certificate as an alternative to traditional administrator certificates.
- **(2019)** created public charter school facilities program, which requires charters to receive approval from the Idaho Housing and Finance Association for issuance of nonprofit facility bonds.
- **(2020)** created a weighted student lottery system for schools targeting needier students.
- **(2022)** allowed public charter schools to hire individuals with a Bachelor's Degree and develop and certificate their own teachers without going through the cumbersome and costly traditional teacher certification process.

School districts can learn from these efforts and consider such options for themselves, especially per staffing flexibilities

Idaho's Charter Sector Serves ALL Children Across Our State – urban, suburban, rural and remote



- Region 1: Seven Charter schools
- Region 2: Four Charter schools
- Region 3: Forty-One Charter schools
- Region 4: Seven Charter schools
- Region 5: Four Charter schools
- Region 6: Thirteen Charter schools
- Seven are Online Charter Schools

Type	FY22 Enrollment	White	Black	Hispanic	All Others	Special Ed	English Learners	Title I
Districts	90.4%	74.1%	1.1%	19.3%	5.5%	11.1%	6.1%	42.2%
Charters	9.6%	76.4%	0.9%	15.9%	6.8%	9.4%	2.7%	48.8%

Source: Data Request Pull from ID SBOE

Legend



Fiscal 2022

Public Charter Schools in Idaho

(The struggle for operational freedoms and fair funding)

LEA	Fall Enrollment	Total Revenues, Audited
Boise Independent School District	23,362	\$353,289,483
<i>Per Pupil</i>		\$ 15,122
Sage International School of Boise	986	\$ 9,012,563
<i>Per Pupil</i>		\$ 9,141
<i>Per Pupil Difference:</i>		\$ (5,982)
Coeur D'Alene School District	10,191	\$123,264,813
<i>Per Pupil</i>		\$ 12,095
Coeur D'Alene Charter Academy	613	\$ 5,499,341
<i>Per Pupil</i>		\$ 8,971
<i>Per Pupil Difference:</i>		\$ (3,124)
Idaho Falls School District	10,194	\$106,230,294
<i>Per Pupil</i>		\$ 10,421
Alturas International Academy	567	\$ 4,554,831
<i>Per Pupil</i>		\$ 8,033
<i>Per Pupil Difference:</i>		\$ (2,388)
West Ada School District	39,027	\$410,923,020
<i>Per Pupil</i>		\$ 10,529
Compass Public Charter School	1,241	\$ 11,270,354
<i>Per Pupil</i>		\$ 9,082
<i>Per Pupil Difference:</i>		\$ (1,448)



Image: Island Park Charter School

Source: <https://www.sde.idaho.gov/finance/files/attendance-enrollment/historical/historical-enrollment-by-District-or-Charter.xlsx>

Idaho Student Enrollment Growth Over Last Decade

- Over the last decade Idaho's **K-12 enrollment** has seen an annual average growth rate of **2.05%**.
- Over the last decade overall **Idaho charter school enrollment** has seen an annual average growth rate of **5.5%**.
- Over the last decade overall **Bluum school enrollment** has seen an annual average growth rate of **31%**.
- **Over the last decade Bluum school enrollment has made up 80% of Idaho charter seat growth.**
- **Since the 2018-19 school year, all new charter school seat growth has been in Bluum schools.**

YEAR	ID K-12 Enrollment	ID Charter Enrollment	Bluum Schools Enrollment
2021-22	319,159	* 29,204	11,115
2020-21	303,349	31,576	10,107
2019-20	293,166	25,364	8,022
2018-19	285,890	24,004	6,657
2017-18	282,383	21,936	5,673
2016-17	279,519	21,351	5,233
2015-16	275,496	20,340	4,356
2014-15	271,779	19,700	4,091
2013-14	270,718	19,367	2,896
2012-13	264,760	18,782	2,713
NET NEW SEATS	54,399	10,422	8,402

Despite the growth many charter schools still have **waitlists**: Alturas Int'l Academy (Idaho Falls) **344**; Mosaics (Caldwell) **226**; Idaho Arts (Nampa) **108**; Sage (Boise) **118**; Compass Public Charter School (Meridian) **578**; and Treasure Valley Classical Academy (Fruitland) **260**.

* Online charter school enrollment has been declining over time in Idaho despite a Covid-19 spike in 2020-21.

INVESTMENT SUMMARY

2015-2022



Number of schools are subject to change through December 31, 2022

Working to Help Idaho Meet the Demand for New Public Charter Schools with Start-Up Support



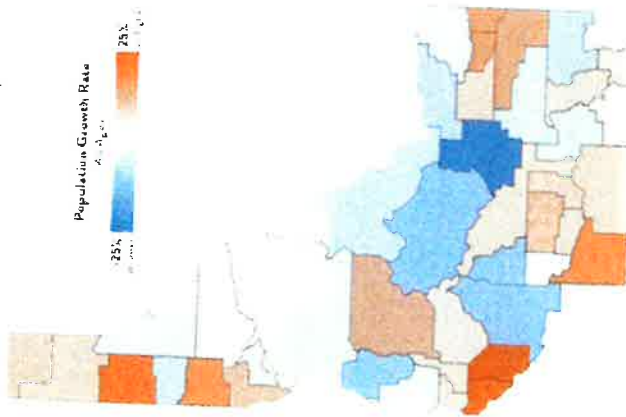
Image: New Charter School Construction, Middleton

Looking Ahead

Statewide: Projected Population and K-8 Student Growth Through 2030

- Statewide, this rate of growth translates into 39,480 more K-8 students than in 2020.
- Idaho elementary schools average 403 students = 98 new schools by 2030.
- If charters manage just 15% of this growth = 15 new K-8 charter schools by 2030.
- As a state, collectively, we need to plan and prepare for this growth – we need to innovate!

2020 to 2030 Population Growth Rates
Idaho, all ages, by County



2020 to 2030 K-8 Population Growth Rates
Idaho, ages 5-14, by County

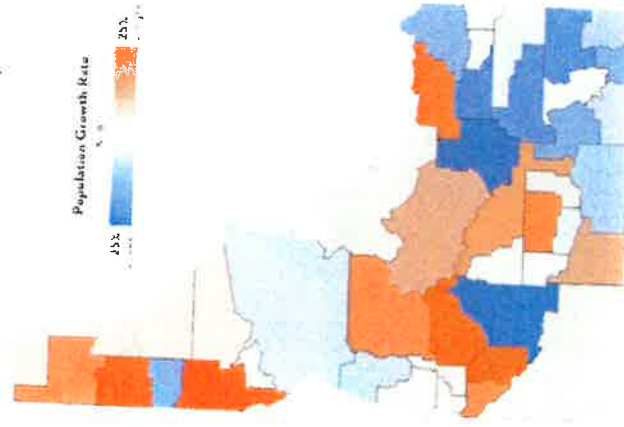


Image: Work Getting Done by a Student at Elevate Caldwell

Source: <http://www.bluum.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Idaho-Charter-Market-Analysis-Bluum-and-Public-Impact.pdf>

ROI - Idaho Public Charter Schools Deliver Results for Student

Reading – 4th

Year	Jurisdiction	Student Group	Average scale score
2022	National	All	217
2022	National public	All	216
1	DoDEA	All	235
2	Massachusetts	All	227
3	Idaho	Charters	225
4	Florida	All	225
5	Wyoming	All	225
6	Colorado	All	223
7	New Hampshire	All	223
8	New Jersey	All	223
9	Utah	All	221
10	Connecticut	All	219
31	Idaho	All	215

Math – 4th

Year	Jurisdiction	Student Group	Average scale score
2022	National	All	236
2022	National public	All	235
1	DoDEA	All	250
2	Wyoming	All	243
3	Massachusetts	All	242
4	Nebraska	All	242
5	Florida	All	241
6	Iowa	All	240
7	North Dakota	All	240
8	Utah	All	240
9	Wisconsin	All	240
10	Indiana	All	239
17	Idaho	Charters	238
24	Idaho	All	236

Reading – 8th

Year	Jurisdiction	Student Group	Average scale score
2022	National	All	260
2022	National public	All	259
1	DoDEA	All	282
2	Idaho	Charters	276
3	New Jersey	All	270
4	Massachusetts	All	269
5	Utah	All	265
6	Connecticut	All	264
7	Idaho	All	264
8	Vermont	All	264
9	Colorado	All	263
10	New Hampshire	All	263

Math – 8th

Year	Jurisdiction	Student Group	Average scale score
2022	National	All	274
2022	National public	All	273
1	DoDEA	All	292
2	Idaho	Charters	291
3	Massachusetts	All	284
4	Idaho	All	282
5	Utah	All	282
6	New Jersey	All	281
7	South Dakota	All	281
8	Wisconsin	All	281
9	Wyoming	All	281
10	Minnesota	All	280

BUT, THERE'S MORE TO DO

Near Term:

- **Support efforts to improve public charter school facility financing options:** rising land costs, higher interest rates and inflationary pressure on building materials makes financing facilities harder.
- **As you put more money into public schools encourage and support more operational flexibilities for school districts:** disperse authority for educating students, encourage risk-taking, and give more authority to schools and districts to innovate.
- **Find time to visit some of the great public charter schools in your area:** there are really good things happening in our public charter schools. Please go see why parents are on wait lists to get their children into these schools.

Longer Term:

- **Move to student-centered funding:** Create one student-centered funding formula that applies to all students in Idaho regardless of the type of school they attend. For each student a school serves, it should receive the same base funding amount with additional amounts for higher-need students.



Image: Upper Carmen Charter School



Thank you and now over to
my friend from ExcelinEd
Matthew Joseph



Idaho Charter School Network

Image: Alturas International, Idaho Falls





Building For Success in Idaho

2023

State Comparisons



Of the four states studied, Idaho ranks last for meeting the facility needs of charter schools.

