



LEGISLATIVE FACT SHEET

Assembly Bill 1604 by Assembly Member Bonta (as amended - March 31, 2023) Charter School Facilities Grant Program

AB 1604 proposes new restrictions on the Charter School Facilities Grant Program (CSFGP), which provides partial reimbursement for rent and lease costs for charter schools serving low-income students. These proposed restrictions could harm both low-income students and charter schools.

What Does AB 1604 Propose?

- Unrestricted authority to block the sale or lease of a charter school building.
- An absolute admissions preference for students who reside in the attendance area of a district-run elementary school.
- Redundant regulations that could harm charter schools' ability to acquire financing and limit their access to funding.

[Positive Audit Affirms Impact of CSFGP](#)

*"We found that charter schools that received program funding **closed less often than other charter schools**, and the schools we selected for review were often **located in areas needing additional classroom space**,"*

Grant Parks, California State Auditor,
February 14, 2023

Unrestricted Authority to Block Sales or Leases

AB 1604 would grant the Attorney General unrestricted authority to block the sale or lease of a charter school building. This authority is vague and broad, with no guardrails. It could lead to disputes and severely undermine the ability of charter schools to access financing needed to acquire facilities.

Admissions Preference that Could Split Families Across Schools

The bill proposes an absolute admissions preference for students who reside in the attendance area of a district-run elementary school. This could split up families and preclude other higher-priority admissions preferences such as siblings, children of teachers, and low-income students.

Redundant Regulations that Could Harm Charter Schools' Ability to Acquire Financing

AB 1604 proposes several redundant regulations, including requiring the California School Finance Authority (CSFA) to investigate potential conflicts, and mandating that charter schools document their non-profit status each year – even though they can only be non-profit or an arm of a school district.

Conclusion

The CSFGP is a highly successful program that provides partial reimbursement for rent and lease costs for charter schools serving low-income students. AB 1604 proposes new restrictions that could harm both low-income students and charter schools. We urge lawmakers to oppose AB 1604 to ensure that low-income students have continued access to high-quality education.