



CASE STUDIES

CHARTER SCHOOLS AND DISTRICT BONDS: POINT TO SUCCESS

Natomas and Chico Follow the San Diego Model

San Diego provided a successful model of district–charter bond collaboration to use in discussions with additional districts. This led to CCSA and CCSA Advocates to engage with additional districts in the pursuit of equitable charter school funding. Because of what took place in San Diego, school districts saw the merits of this approach and entered into successful collaborations with public charter schools in their communities. The district–charter collaborations in subsequent communities followed the San Diego model with some small adjustments:

Natomas Unified School District

Natomas Unified School District (NUSD) has gained approval for two bond measures that provide equitable charter school funding. Measure J in 2014 was a \$129 million measure; Measure L in 2018 will provide \$172 million in funding. The Natomas school district is a much smaller than those in San Diego or Los Angeles, and the charter school community in Natomas included six charter schools. CCSA and the charter school community were both actively engaged with representatives from NUSD early in the planning process. As a smaller school district than SDUSD, NUSD took a different approach to the construction of their ballot measure. Instead of creating a general set-aside of bond funding for charter school applicants, NUSD identified specific charter schools that would benefit from school bond funding should the voters within the district approve the bond measure. The language of Measure J did just that and named specific charter school projects instead of setting aside a particular dollar amount for charter schools. This allowed voters to see where their money was going and prevented last-minute shifting of dollars.

Chico Unified School District

Chico Unified School District (CUSD) is another recent example of CCSA, CCSA advocates and a local charter school community working collectively to advocate for public charter school inclusion in a school district bond measure. This work culminated in a collaboration with CUSD to support Measure K, a \$152 million bond measure approved by local voters in 2016. Unlike the districts discussed above, CUSD opted to set aside a specific percentage of the total bond funds to be raised through bond issuances to fund charter school projects. The percentage of funds, approximately 15%, was representative of the percentage of public school students within the district that attended eight charter schools. Like SDUSD, CUSD formed an advisory committee of charter school leaders to plan for the allocation of the charter school funding.