**The Systematic Destruction of Public Education in Arizona**

**Republicans solved the 2009 budget crisis by starving public districts while financing a flood of new charter schools that were assured increasing budgets every year.**

The reason you see new charter school buildings all over metro Phoenix while district schools fight to buy computers and maintain aging facilities is the direct result of inequities in funding crafted by the school choice obsessed Republicans in the Arizona Legislature.

The recession in 2009 resulted in Arizona enacting some of the largest cuts in public education funding in the nation, plummeting Arizona to 48th in per pupil in education spending. Those cuts were made solely to school districts while charters budgets increased.

The Legislature eliminated $180 million/year in soft capital funding (textbooks, computers, equipment, buses) for districts starting in 2009. Districts received $463 million in capital funding in 2008 but by 2013, district capital revenue declined to $249 million. School district revenue for capital expenses is still 22% lower than in 2020 than in 2008 and despite recent increases in funding to increase teacher salaries, overall state funding for school districts is still $662/pupil less in inflation adjusted dollars in 2020 than in 2008.

Arizona charter schools were not penalized in the same way – in fact they were awarded additional funding. Charter school per pupil state revenue has increased by 25% since 2008. Charters received $2054/pupil more state funding than districts in 2008. That number has increased to $3,495/pupil more in 2020. (Districts receive over 50% of their revenue from property taxes while charters are financed entirely from state education funds)

District – Charter State Revenue 2008 and 2020

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2008 | 2020 |
| District State Revenue | $4,453,747,156 | $4,557,363,878 |
| District ADM | 950,367 | 918,623 |
| **Revenue/ADM** | **$4,686** | **$4,961** |
| Inflation Adjusted (20.2%) | $5,624 |  |
| Charter State Revenue | $631,344,147 | $1,713,385,836 |
| Charter ADM | 93,668 | 202,632 |
| **Revenue/ADM** | **$6,740** | **$8,456** |
| Inflation Adjusted (20.2%) | $8,088 |  |

Superintendent’s Annual Reports at: <https://www.azed.gov/finance/reports>

While the Legislature stripped districts of an average of $172 million in capital funds annually between 2009 and 2020, charter schools were allowed to expand unchecked, costing the state an average of $29 million in additional funding every year, since charters receive about $3,000/pupil more in state funding than districts. The Republicans solved the budget crisis by starving public districts, while allowing a flood of new charter schools that were assured increasing budgets every year.

The inequity in funding has transferred millions of dollars way from public districts. In 2008 charter schools had 9% of total enrollment and received 12% of all state education funds. Twelve year later, charters have 18% of total enrollment but are now extracting over 27% of state education funds.

District – Charter % of State Revenue 2008 and 2020

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2008 | 2020 |
| District State Revenue | $4,453,747,156 | $4,557,363,878 |
| Charter State Revenue | $631,344,147 | $1,713,385,836 |
| Charter % State Revenue | 12% | 27% |
| District ADM | 950,367 | 918,623 |
| Charter ADM | 93,668 | 202,632 |
| Charter % State Enrollment | 9% | 18% |

(Superintendent’s Annual Reports at: <https://www.azed.gov/finance/reports>)

The bottom line is charter schools have over $1000/pupil more state funds to spend than districts do compared to 2008 - money charters can use to lower class sizes, build new buildings, and pocket profits.

For example:

* Charters owned $511 million in land, buildings and equipment in 2008 - about $5,458/pupil in assets. In 2020 that number increased to $2.475 billion - $12,214/pupil in assets.
* The number of students per teacher increased for districts 2008-2020 from 17.6 students/teacher to 18.7 students/teacher as class sizes increased. Charter schools, on the other hand, reduced the number of students per teacher by 2.5 students – 19.45 students/teacher in 2008 to 17.0 students/teacher in 2020.
* Charter schools averaged $176/pupil for instructional supplies in 2020. Districts averaged $28/pupil for supplies last year.

The loss of state funding for districts means they became less competitive with charters, being forced to raise class sizes, cut programs, and forgo staff pay raises because they had to divert operating funds to fix buildings and buy buses.

Crumbling public schools with low paid teachers, few classroom supplies, and overcrowded classrooms. New charter schools with small class sizes and ample supplies. The perfect plan to destroy public education in Arizona.