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Department of Education: Charter Schools and Cyber Charter Schools #6-349

I applaud that the Department of Education is seeking tools of state regulation to bring transparency, accountability, equity and quality to Pennsylvania's charter public schools. As a citizen of the Commonwealth, I have followed charter school development in Pennsylvania for many years. Slowly but inexorably, tax resources are being shifted from brick-and-mortar institutions to more dispersed charters. Steadily, children from lower income families are being short-changed. The lack of oversight has permitted shenanigans with finance and instruction, the public assuming that *somebody's* watching. *As I read them, the proposed Charter School and Cyber Charter Schools regulations begin to offer answers to my questions:*

As a taxpayer, I want accountability.

- What admission policies are being used?
- To what degree has sieving out special ed students raised the comparative achievement levels?
- How is fiscal administration demonstrating best practice with 3 billion tax dollars received by charters?
- On what do cyber charters spend their public dollars?
- How are conflict of interest issues penalized?

As a citizen, I want quality.

- How well are students achieving?
- How are students from under-served communities achieving?
- What academic advantages accrue to students? Parents? Society?
- What are charter schools achieving that has not been done traditionally?

The proposed regulations offer transparency. Department of Education oversight and data collection will promote examination of charter school processes and results. Cyber charter schools will be treated like other entities receiving state funding.

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