



ED, CharterRegs

From: Brittany Macioce <noreply@citizenwindow.io>
Sent: Friday, October 8, 2021 11:40 AM
To: ED, CharterRegs
Subject: [External] Opposition to Regulation #6-349: Charter Schools and Cyber Charter Schools

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Dear Secretary Ortega and the Pennsylvania Department of Education,

Both of my elementary school-age children suffered last year in their brick and mortar building. My daughter struggled with speech and reading. Her Title I teachers were repeatedly pulled to cover other classes or were not in school. How do young children learn proper letter sounds when they can't see the mouth of their teacher??? In our first month at CCA, her problems have been magnified and her teacher worked quickly with me to coordinate an evaluation. I am so relieved because I know CCA is NOT going to let her fail like B&M did all last year.

My son struggled with concentration and focus while wearing a mask last year and all of the ridiculous requirements to distance kids. That is exactly what it did. Kids became distant. My son hated going to school every day.

We decided to try cyber school this school year because anything was better than kids wearing a mask for 7 hours and not getting the Education they deserve. Our school has failed my children.

Thanks to the Governor's tyrannical overreach, we found CCA and we couldn't be happier. Governor Wolf created this mess, disrupting education and trying to remove parental rights. We will not stand for it! We demand more support for cyber charter schools and more funding. Brick and mortar should not keep any of the money or funding when they are doing nothing for my children.

As a member of the public charter school community, I am submitting these comments in opposition to the proposed Regulation #6-349: Charter Schools and Cyber Charter Schools.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education is a taxpayer-funded agency whose stated mission is "to ensure that every learner has access to a world-class education system that academically prepares children and adults to succeed as productive citizens." This proposed regulation does not support your agency's mission and is harmful toward the 150,000-plus public charter school students, parents and educators in the state.

The majority of Pennsylvania's charter school students are underserved. Whether it's a failing school, lack of resources or their emotional and learning needs were simply not being met in the school district, charter schools are serving a population that chose another option. You cannot treat these students, parents and educators as second-class citizens.

My charter school works hard to ensure students have the tools to succeed. It conducts yearly audits and abides by the same reporting standards as district schools, but this regulation would increase the requirements for charter schools only.

This regulation is punitive toward charter schools and would burden them with additional challenges and requirements to maintain operations or grow to serve their student populations. For example, new schools or schools that wish to renew or expand would be required to go through an application process that lacks objective standards and a consistent process.

As you know, the authorizer charged with approving these ambiguous applications is the school district, when a majority of school districts have publicly opposed charter schools and are actively fighting to shut them down. This is essentially the status quo anti-charter process that's been used for years, with no positive reform.

The pandemic made clear that families need more choices for education, not fewer. One size does not fit all was made clear when more than 22,000 students enrolled in charter schools last year.

Throughout the pandemic, charter schools have shared resources and collaborated within the educational community to ensure students have continuity of education and the tools for a quality education. They should be collaborated with as leaders in the education community, not targeted with overreaching regulations.

Every child and parent in Pennsylvania deserves the right to choose the public education option best for them. It is clear anti-charter special interest groups are driving this proposed regulation. Stop playing politics with our children's futures.

Sincerely,

Brittany Macioce

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