

**ED, CharterRegs**

From: LEARNPA <learn@learnpa.org>
Sent: Friday, October 15, 2021 10:53 AM
To: ED, CharterRegs
Cc: Frank T Gallagher
Subject: [External] Public comment in support of PDE proposed charter regulation #6-349
Attachments: LEARN - Support of Charter Regulations 10.15.2021.pdf

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To whom it may concern-

Attached please find a letter in support of the proposed charter regulation #6-349.

Thank you,

Leaders for Educational Accountability and Reform Network



October 15, 2021

VIA EMAIL RA-EDCharterRegs@pa.gov

Independent Regulatory Review Commission
Department of Education
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126

Re: Public comment in support of PDE proposed charter regulation #6-349

Dear Members of the General Assembly, Independent Regulatory Review Commission, and Secretary Ortega:

I am writing on behalf of the 89 members of the Leaders for Educational Accountability and Reform Network (LEARN) to express our support of the proposed regulation #6-349 for the operation of charter schools in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Charter schools are public schools under the School Code, but they are afforded some flexibility with regards to school code regulations (e.g. they can hire up to 25% of staff without proper certifications.) For years, public schools and public-school advocacy groups across PA have been urging lawmakers to hold charters to the same standards and rules as public schools. Charter schools should face the same accountability as traditional public schools, and for many years they have not. The system is highly inequitable and ultimately the children and taxpayers of the state are the ones who are cheated.

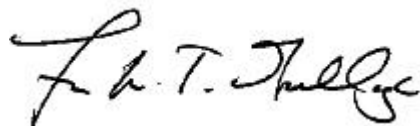
We support the proposed clarification of current charter regulations, including:

1. Allowing school districts to hold charter school applicants to high academic standards and ensure equity with regards to the delivery of instruction. Many of the state's charters and cyber charters are among the lowest performing in the state.
2. Requiring charter schools to develop a non-discriminatory enrollment policy and that admission policies be publicly posted.
3. Clarifying that charter school trustees are subject to the Employees Ethics Act. Public school employees and board members are already expected to follow this Act. Charter school trustees should be held to these ethical standards and to disclose and abstain from any conflicts of interest.
4. Requiring that charter schools follow common auditing practices. This will make reviews of financial reporting much easier for the PA Department of Education as well as schools districts that have approved a charter.
5. Outlining a clear process to reconcile disputes on tuition payments between a school district and charter school. These disputes can be lengthy and involve significant attorney fees. A clear process will aid both the charter school and sending school district.
6. Ensuring that charter schools offer the same, equivalent health care coverage as the approving school district. This provision is part of charter law, yet some charter schools are not following it.

Please pass these regulations and hold charter schools accountable for following charter school law and properly educating their students.

LEARN is a collaborative of urban, suburban, and rural school districts that support Educational Reform, but only in a way that holds schools accountable. Clarification of the charter school regulations is aligned to our mission and should be aligned to anyone who cares about quality education for students in the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank T. Gallagher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "F" and a long, sweeping underline.

Frank T. Gallagher, Ed. D

On behalf of Leaders for Educational Accountability and Reform Network