

What would you think if you were in line to check out at a store and the person in front of you was purchasing the same item you were, but was charged less and when you asked why that was you were told the price is based on where you live? Right now, Pennsylvania law allows cyber charter schools to charge tuition rates not based on what it costs them to educate their students, but on the per student expenditure of the school district from which the students come. In our local area, cyber school tuition for regular education students for the same product costs local districts between \$8,950 and \$12,512 per student and between \$17,495 and \$24,821 for special education students.

What would you think if you were told that local schools that operate their own cyber education program do so on average of \$5,000 per regular education student (Education Voters of PA, 2019) and, similarly, about half the cost cyber charter schools are allowed to collect for special education students? Considering cyber charter schools do not have buildings to heat, roofs to replace, grounds that need to be maintained, transportation and food service programs, band and athletic uniforms to purchase, and so on, one has wonder to if they have twice the revenue and half the costs, where does that extra money go? Maybe there's a reason cyber charter schools are also referred to as for-profit schools.

What would you think if the product that was being funding by tax payer dollars at twice the cost was also demonstrated to be an inferior product? Comparing PA-licensed cyber charter schools and the seventeen school districts in the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit, twelve of thirteen cyber charter schools scored below all seventeen CSIU districts for total percent proficient on the 2018 PSSA exams. Keystone exam results are similar in that while 75% of CSIU students earned proficient scores, only 45% of cyber charter school students achieved proficiency (Eidex).

More than one hundred and fifty districts in the state operate their own cyber education programs including most of those we represent because we understand that, in some instances, cyber education is better for individual students. Therefore, it is not the purpose of this letter to advocate for the elimination of cyber education or of cyber charter schools. Instead, the purpose is to address a matter of fairness – fairness for students attending traditional school districts and the tax payer that support them.

If local districts were required to pay cyber charter school tuition that represented what it actually costs those entities to educate their students, the savings would stay in those districts often preventing them from cutting student programs or raising taxes. Currently, there are two bills introduced in the Pennsylvania Legislature that do just that. House Bill 526 and Senate Bill 34 would save millions of dollars for school districts that make tuition payments for their students to attend cyber charter schools that they never authorized. The bills would require parents to pay for their child's education in a cyber charter school if the school district of residence offers its own full-time cyber education program.

We urge you contact your legislators and encourage them to get these two bills out of committee, onto the floor for a vote, and support the passing of them:

Senator John Gordner	27 th District	(717) 787-8928
Senator Gene Yaw	23 rd District	(717) 787-3280
Representative Garth Everett	84 th District	(717) 787-5270
Representative Fred Keller	85 th District	(717) 787-3443

Representative Curt Masser 107th District (717) 260-6134

Representative David Millard 109th District (717) 783-1102

Representative Linda Schlegel Culver 108th District (717) 787-3485

James Geffken
Benton Area School District

Cathy Keegan
Milton Area School District

Donald Wheeler
Bloomsburg Area School District

Bernard Stellar
Mount Carmel Area School District

Harry Mathias
Central Columbia School District

Chad Cohrs
Selinsgrove Area School District

Steven Skalka
Lewisburg Area School District

Chris Venna
Shamokin Area School District

David Campbell
Line Mountain School District

Thomas Scholvin
Shikellamy School District

Richard Musselman
Mid-West School District

Paul Caputo
Southern Columbia Area School District

Daniel Lichtel
Mifflinburg Area School District

Alan Hack
Warrior Run School District

Cynthia Jenkins
Millville Area School District