

Additional Letter Option

[Your Name]
[Your Address]
[City, State, ZIP Code]

[Date]

[Legislator's Name]
[Office Address]
[City, State, ZIP Code]

Dear [Legislator's Name],

As a constituent in your community, I would like to ask you to support additional cyber charter school funding reform as part of the 2025-26 state budget. School leaders need legislation that sets fairer payments to cyber charter schools while maintaining choices in public education for Pennsylvania families.

Mandatory cyber charter school tuition payments continue to drive property tax increases and cuts to school district programs. School districts now spend more than \$1 billion of taxpayer money each year on tuition to cyber charter schools, due to the flawed and outdated funding formula.

The currently flawed funding formula provides cyber charters with vastly different tuition rates despite providing all enrolled students with the same educational programming. This is because cyber charter school tuition rates are based on the home school district's education expenses, rather than the cyber charter school's educational expenses. For the 2024-25 school year, tuition rates for non-special education vary by \$21,300, and rates for special education vary by \$44,391.

Cyber charter schools simply do not have the same level of expenses as their brick-and-mortar counterparts, yet they are paid as if they do. Despite claims that charter schools receive 25-30% less funding per student than school districts, the reality is that charter schools receive only 10% less funding per student, despite not having nearly the same level of expenditures as school districts. These funding flaws allow cyber charter schools to spend millions of taxpayer dollars on advertising, gifts and perks, state-of-the-art facilities, and to amass huge sums of taxpayer dollars in unrestricted reserve funds.

The 2025-26 state budget package should include cyber charter school funding reform which establishes a statewide cyber charter school tuition rate that does not exceed \$10,000 per student for non-special education students with a provision that requires all school districts to pay the statewide tuition rate or their calculated charter school tuition rate, whichever is lower. In addition, the legislation should implement a tiered formula for special education funding similar to the formula used to drive state special education funding to school districts, which is based on the needs of the individual student.

These two changes alone would save Pennsylvania taxpayers more than \$300 million while still preserving cyber charter schools as an option for Pennsylvania families. These savings would allow school districts to reinvest desperately needed dollars back into classrooms and academic programs, invest in infrastructure and technology, and provide relief to local taxpayers – all without a dollar of new funding from the state.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]