

RESOLUTION CALLING FOR CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING REFORM

BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE

_____ SCHOOL DISTRICT

WHEREAS, the average Pennsylvania school district spends millions of dollars in taxpayer money annually in mandatory payments to brick-and-mortar and cyber charter schools; and these payments are calculated in a manner which requires districts to send more money to charter schools than is needed to operate their programs and places a significant financial burden on districts' resources and taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, the current charter school funding formula was established in 1997 under the state's Charter School Law and has not been changed in the 23 years since it was first created; and the formula for regular education programs is unfair because it is based on a school district's expenditures and not what it actually costs to educate a child in the charter school; and

WHEREAS, the calculation for charter special education tuition is unfair because it is also based on the special education expenditures of the school district rather than the charter school; and although the General Assembly revised the special education funding formula in 2014 to more accurately target special education resources for students identified with high, medium and low needs, this formula was applied only to school districts and not to charter schools; and

WHEREAS, because the tuition rate calculations are based on the school district's expenses, they create wide discrepancies in the amount of tuition paid by different districts for the same charter school education and result in drastic overpayments to charter schools; and these discrepancies in tuition rates for regular education students can vary by almost \$13,000 per student and by \$39,000 for special education students; and

WHEREAS, the latest data from the PA Department of Education (PDE) shows that in 2017-18, total charter school tuition payments (cyber and brick-and-mortar) were more than \$1.8 billion, with \$519 million of that total paid by districts for tuition to cyber charter schools; and

WHEREAS, further analysis of PDE data shows that in 2014-15, school districts paid charter schools more than \$100 million for special education services in excess of what charter schools reported spending on special education; and

WHEREAS, the costs of charter schools for school districts continue to grow significantly each year; and on a statewide basis are the most identified source of pressure on school district budgets; and

WHEREAS, the need for significant charter school funding reform is urgent; and school districts are struggling to keep up with growing charter costs and are forced to raise taxes and cut staffing, programs and services for their own students in order to pay millions of dollars to charter schools.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the _____ School Board calls upon the General Assembly to meaningfully revise the existing flawed charter school funding systems for regular and special education to ensure that school districts and taxpayers are no longer overpaying these schools or reimbursing for costs the charter schools do not incur. We, along with the Pennsylvania School Boards Association, are advocating for substantial change.

Adopted this _____ day of _____, 2020.

Signed,

School Board President

Board Secretary

**Resolution Calling for the General Assembly to Provide
Critical Support and Mandate Relief
Benefitting Public Schools and Students**

By the Board of Directors of the

_____ **School District**

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's more than 1.7 million public school students deserve the highest quality education; and the state's public schools work best when they have the resources to give all students the opportunities they need to succeed, meet prescribed standards, support adequacy and promote equity; and

WHEREAS, the unexpected closure of school buildings beginning in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic has forced unparalleled challenges upon school districts to stretch funding to meet the needs of students and families with meals, online education programs, technical resources and other needs; and in addition to these unbudgeted expenses, school districts are required to continue paying operational bills, including the costliest expenses such as salaries, pensions, and charter school tuition; and

WHEREAS, mandated school district costs have eclipsed state funding increases; and the _____ School District's mandated costs, which include pension and charter school tuition among other expenses, have increased by _____ from 2010-11 through 2017-2018; and

WHEREAS, due to the economic implications of this pandemic, school districts statewide face declining local revenue collection that is projected at more than \$325 million this year and as much as an additional \$1 billion in local revenue next year; and the _____ School District is facing projected local deficits ranging from \$_____ to \$_____ ; and school districts need support from the General Assembly as they continue to navigate these developing situations; and

WHEREAS, the _____ School District recognizes the commonwealth will experience significant shortfalls in revenue; and that the federal CARES Act funds will provide important support to help maintain education funding levels; and the district believes that the use of federal funds by the state should not supplant the allocation of critically-needed state subsidies in current or future budgets; and

WHEREAS, as school districts must confront numerous challenges in order to re-open schools, they face difficult decisions about how to allocate declining financial resources to sustain high-quality instruction and other essential services with the physical and mental health and safety of their students in mind; and school districts need certainty from the state on matters of funding so they can plan and budget appropriately for the entire 2020-21 fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, school districts could realize cost savings through the enactment of broad, long-term relief from unfunded and underfunded mandates that consume much of district budgets; and one specific solution is the enactment of a permanent mandate waiver program that could provide significant savings, both in terms of dollars and efficiency, as well as reduce the number of burdensome mandates placed on schools.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the _____ School Board along with the Pennsylvania School Boards Association calls upon the General Assembly to prioritize public education in the commonwealth's 2020-21 state budget and, at a minimum, maintain the 2019-20 level of state investments for public education without reductions in basic education, special education and other critical subsidies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the _____ School Board calls upon the General Assembly to provide cost savings to school districts through approval of a permanent mandate waiver program which would enable districts to improve instructional programs or operate in a more effective, efficient and economical manner.

Adopted this _____ day of _____, 2020.

Signed,

School Board President

Board Secretary



Pennsylvania School Boards Association Principles for Governance and Leadership

Pennsylvania school boards are committed to providing **every** student the opportunity to grow and achieve. The actions taken by the board ultimately have both short and long-term impact in the classroom. Therefore, school directors collectively and individually will...



Advocate Earnestly

- Promote public education as a keystone of democracy
- Engage the community by seeking input, building support networks, and generating action
- Champion public education by engaging members of local, state and federal legislative bodies



Lead Responsibly

- Prepare for, attend and actively participate in board meetings
- Work together in a spirit of harmony, respect and cooperation
- Participate in professional development, training and board retreats
- Collaborate with the Superintendent as the Team of 10



Govern Effectively

- Adhere to an established set of rules and procedures for board operations
- Develop, adopt, revise and review policy
- Align decisions to policy
- Differentiate between governance and management, delegating management tasks to administration
- Allocate finances and resources
- Ensure compliance with local, state and federal laws



Plan Thoughtfully

- Adopt and implement a collaborative comprehensive planning process, including regular reviews
- Set annual goals that are aligned with the comprehensive plan
- Develop a financial plan that anticipates both short and long-term needs
- Formulate a master facilities plan conducive to teaching and learning



Evaluate Continuously

- Utilize appropriate data to make informed decisions
- Use effective practices for the evaluation of the superintendent
- Assess student growth and achievement
- Review effectiveness of the comprehensive plan



Communicate Clearly

- Promote open, honest and respectful dialogue among the board, staff and community
- Encourage input and support for the district from the school community
- Protect confidentiality
- Honor the sanctity of executive session



Act Ethically

- Never use the position for improper benefit to self or others
- Act to avoid actual or perceived conflicts of interest
- Recognize the absence of authority outside of the collective board
- Respect the role, authority and input of the superintendent
- Balance the responsibility to provide educational programs with being stewards of community resources
- Abide by the majority decision

Represented by the signatures below, adoption of these principles assures the school board, individual school directors and chief school administrators adhere to the same principles across our commonwealth. Adopted on: _____

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____