

**RESOLUTION CALLING FOR CHARTER SCHOOL LEGISLATION REFORM BY
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE BEDFORD COUNTY, BLAIR COUNTY,
CAMBRIA COUNTY, AND SOMERSET COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

WHEREAS, charter schools are independent entities separate from public school districts, and yet Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8 school districts spent \$XX million, via mandatory payments to brick-and-mortar and cyber charter schools for the 2019-2020 school year; and

WHEREAS, the charter school tuition funding formula is fundamentally flawed because it mandates the inclusion of charter school tuition costs paid by each district in its total expenses; therefore, the per-student tuition rate is inflated, insofar as the tuition rates districts pay charter schools are actually higher than each district's per-student expenditure; and

WHEREAS, the mandated charter school tuition rate calculations are based on school districts' expenses, including costs for career and technical education programs and student activities such as athletics, intramurals, and fine arts; all of which charter schools are not required to provide, and many do not offer, leading to further inflated tuition payments; and

WHEREAS, charter schools frequently spend less than they receive for special education services; this is primarily due to charter schools disproportionately identifying students with special needs in certain less costly areas and avoiding the enrollment of students with special needs in certain costlier areas; and

WHEREAS, charter schools are not governed by boards with members elected by the community, and elected public school district school boards have no oversight authority on how charter schools use public funding; and further, many charter schools do not publicize their meetings and provide financial and policy transparency, leading to potential hidden conflicts of interest; and

WHEREAS, all of our school districts offer cyber learning options for students with local oversight at a significantly lower cost than cyber charter schools; and

WHEREAS, cyber charter schools typically have minimal facilities or grounds for student use, but receive the same per capita funding as their brick-and-mortar counterparts, which shifts funding away from both public-school districts and brick-and-mortar charter schools; and

WHEREAS, the need for significant charter school funding reform remains vital. For years, school districts have been challenged to keep up with escalating charter school costs while struggling to minimize tax increases but also maintain programs; and

WHEREAS, while up to 25 percent of the faculty at charter schools may be uncertified, public school districts are required to employ 100 percent certified faculty, which creates

an uneven playing field that can result in public school districts encountering obstacles with offering programs when certified teachers are not available.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the respective boards of directors for the undersigned school districts, in light of our concerns with the current charter school law, call upon local legislators to support the proposed charter school reform bill and address the following:

- Eliminate the inclusion of charter tuition costs and students within the tuition formula;
- Reform charter funding formula to eliminate costs for programming not offered – career and technical centers, athletics, intramurals, fine arts, and other extracurricular activities;
- Reform special education to align costs with services provided and ensure appropriate student identification;
- Enhance the power and authority of school boards in charter oversight, increasing transparency and taxpayer understanding;
- Enforce equal prohibitions on conflicts of interest;
- Require school district board representation on charter school boards;
- Eliminate tuition payments to cyber charter schools if a school district offers a cyber option; and
- Provide school districts with the same teacher certification flexibility.

In light of the critical need for reform, we are advocating for substantial change in order to better realize the stated goal of the current charter school law to "improve pupil learning." Each district's administration will inform and educate their respective communities on the issues described in this resolution. We encourage our community members to weigh in on this important matter and share their thinking with their legislators.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be posted on the respective districts' websites and submitted to the elected state senators and representatives of our school districts in the General Assembly, and to the Governor of Pennsylvania.

The above resolution was duly adopted by the Bellwood-Antis School District Board of School Directors on June 15, 2021 by a vote of 7 to 0.

Signed,

Robert Fesher

First Name Last Name
School Board President
School District

Ally A. J.

First Name Last Name
School Board Vice-President
School District

Ken Zwassman

First Name Last Name
School Board Secretary
School District

[Signature]

First Name Last Name
School Board Treasure
School District

[Signature]

First Name Last Name
School Board Member
School District

First Name Last Name
School Board Member
School District

[Signature]

First Name Last Name
School Board Member
School District

[Signature]

First Name Last Name
School Board Member
School District

Hope A. Ray

First Name Last Name
School Board Member
School District

[Signature]

First Name Last Name
Superintendent
School District

Kathleen Buch

First Name Last Name
School Board Member
School District

