



Charter School Reform Legislation

House Bill 97

HB97 is a comprehensive charter reform bill. It reflects years of compromise and negotiation with all of the major education stakeholders. Over time, all of the controversial provisions have been stripped away (e.g. independent authorizers, direct pay) so all that remains are commonsense policies that meet the needs of both charter schools and traditional public schools. While this bill does not capture all that is necessary to create the conditions for high-quality charters to grow, it is an essential first-step towards modernizing Pennsylvania's outdated charter law, which Auditor General DePasquale has called "the worst in the nation."

HB97 contains policies that support the needs of charter schools

- Allows high-performing charter schools to get a 10-year renewal
- Allows multiple charter schools to merge under the governance of a single board of trustees
- Gives charter schools the right of first refusal for unused district property
- Clarifies that charter schools can operate one school at multiple locations
- Does NOT make any cuts to special education funding
- Does NOT cap enrollment

HB97 contains policies that support the needs of traditional public schools

- Changes the per-pupil funding formula for cyber charter schools, resulting in \$27 million in savings for local school districts
- Caps unassigned fund balances for charter schools at between 12-16 percent of budgeted expenses
- Does NOT make any changes to existing law on enrollment caps
- Does NOT strip away any authority and decision-making from local school districts

HB97 contains policies that increase fairness and accountability

- Creates a funding commission to make recommendations on changing the charter funding formula
- Strengthens ethics, transparency and governance provisions
- Creates a performance matrix that will be used as the primary factor in evaluating charters for renewal
- Requires charter schools, upon renewal, to have a teacher evaluation system that is similar to what is required of traditional public schools
- Creates a standard enrollment form that all charters must use
- Strengthens the enrollment process to ensure the integrity of lotteries and wait lists
- Changes the composition of the Charter Appeals Board to make it more balanced

If you have any questions about provisions in the bill, please contact Jonathan Cetel at 215-704-4880 or jonathan.cetel@penncan.org.