Pennsylvania has some of the most antiquated and taxpayer-unfriendly charter school laws in the nation. While they are often hailed as “school choice,” cyber charter schools have done little to strengthen education, protect taxpayers or offer effective programs and services. Instead, they siphon money off neighborhood public schools with little accountability for how those funds actually get spent.

The Rose Tree Media School District joins dozens of others in urging Governor Tom Wolf and the state legislature to support charter school reform.

**WHY ARE CYBER CHARTERS SO HARMFUL?**

**RUNAWAY COSTS**
This school year, RTMSD will spend **$754,000 in taxpayer money** to pay for **36 students** to attend poorly performing cyber charter schools. That money could be better spent:
- Reducing class sizes
- Completing needed maintenance upgrades
- Increasing access to technology for elementary students
- Staffing for full-day kindergarten

**LACK OF TRANSPARENCY**
Unlike public school districts, charter schools do not answer to taxpayers, resulting in less oversight and the accumulation of significant budget surpluses. They often spend this money on travel, advertising and board of director expenses.
- In 2018, Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School had a total **fund balance of more than $65 million**.
- In 2018, the former CEO of PA Cyber was **sentenced to federal prison** for siphoning $8 million from the charter school he created to spend on houses, a plane and other luxuries.
- **60%** of RTMSD charter school students attend cyber programs where tuition funds administrative costs which are double to triple the amount of per-pupil costs for administrator salaries and benefits compared to our district.

**EXCESSIVE TUITION**
The tuition paid by public school districts to charter schools for special education students is a flat rate based on a district’s per-pupil budgeted expenditure for special education, rather than the actual cost of providing those services to students with special needs.
Charter schools **receive as much as $40,000 per student**, yet the actual cost of special education services provided by charter schools is estimated to only be **between $5,000 to $10,000** per student. This creates a surplus in taxpayer funding that charters are not required to return or even report.

**POOR PERFORMANCE**
All the cyber schools that RTMSD students currently attend are on the state’s list for either Comprehensive Support and Improvement or Targeted Support and Improvement. This means they fall into the lowest 5% of state Title I schools and/or have a graduation rate of less than 67%.
The experiment of charter schools was based on the idea that they would provide innovative, high-quality and highly effective educational programs with significant cost savings once disconnected from the constraints of traditional public school districts. **This has simply not proven to be true for many of the charter schools that have been launched.**

**WHAT CAN YOU DO?**
**CONTACT** Your State Representative and Senator:

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