



NEW YORK STATE

# COUNCIL OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

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## NO MORE CHARTER SCHOOLS NOW!

**The New York State Council of School Superintendents opposes legislation to authorize more charter schools during this week's special session of the State Legislature.**

The Council's position is that whatever the state hopes to gain from its experiment with charter schools should not come at the expense of traditional district schools – the schools taxpayers fund to educate the overwhelming majority of children.

There should be no increase in the cap – outside of New York City – until the state adopts systematic reforms in charter school funding and accountability.

**Punitive Financing System for School Districts:** The current mechanism for funding charter school operations forces district schools to lose in order for charter schools to gain. Virtually every operating dollar going into a charter school comes out of a district school. Because of fixed costs such as heating, lighting, maintenance, and insurance, school districts realize almost no savings when a student transfers to a charter school.

More, if a student transfers from a private school to a charter school, the district's payment to a charter school is not offset by any savings.

**Unreasonable Expectations:** Even while presuming savings that districts cannot achieve, the current charter school law anticipates school districts will still maintain the capacity to instantaneously reabsorb charter school students whenever a charter school closes, scales back enrollment, or is abandoned by students. They cannot.

**Taxation Without Representation:** Charter schools force taxation without representation. Charter schools are approved by state agencies, even in communities where residents are strongly opposed.

**Weak Oversight:** Impeded by a weak and unclear statute, the State Education Department has provided feeble oversight of charter schools. Not until a report was issued by New York State United Teachers this week was it clear how dramatically charter schools were failing to educate all children. The NYSUT report found charter school serve *far lower* percentages of economically disadvantaged children, English language learners, and students with disabilities than district schools in the communities where they operate.

**Action Requested:** The defects in the current charter school statute are substantial. They CANNOT be resolved in a quick special session. The Council urges legislators to be responsible. *Reform the charter school law – in 2007.*

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