New York State Educational Conference Board

OPPOSE: BUILDING AID FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS

The seven major statewide education leadership groups representing parents, teachers, administrators, and school board members all across New York State join in vigorously opposing proposals to provide State Building Aid to support the construction and renovation of charter schools.

Providing Building Aid for charter schools would divert revenue and further undermine the state's ability to adequately support the district schools that educate approximately 85 percent of the state's children. State aid for district schools remains inadequate – over 70 percent of districts are still receiving less state aid this year than in 2008-09, five years in the past.

Promoting the construction of more charter schools would compound the financial pressures they create for school districts – as explained below:

- ***The current state mechanism for funding charter school operations pits them against district schools:*** The basic charter school funding mechanism virtually assures an adversarial relationship with school districts: every dollar of regular tax-funded operating support that goes into a charter school comes out of a school district.

- ***Charters increase district costs:*** Because of fixed costs and enrollment patterns, rarely, if ever, does a district realize 100 percent savings from movement of students to a charter school. Often, the opposite is true: districts could spend less in total by taking back all charter school students.

- ***Charters impose financial uncertainty on districts:*** Not only don't charter schools guarantee district savings, some of any potential savings is lost because districts need to maintain capacity to absorb and educate students who return from charter schools during the school year.

- ***Charter schools can constitute <u>taxation without representation</u>:*** If the Board of Regents or State University Trustees approve the creation of a charter school, local taxpayers are required to fund tuition payments to it, even if they or their elected representatives strenuously opposed the school's creation.

- ***Charter schools are not subject to requirements of the school district property tax cap:*** If a school district is unable to gain voter approval for its budget, it is prohibited from increasing its local tax levy at all, forcing cuts to programs and services. There is no mechanism in law requiring charter schools to absorb any share of the resulting reductions.

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