

## Reject Charter School Expansion at the Expense of Public Schools

**THE COUNCIL urges the legislature to reject the Executive's proposed charter school enhancements and the cost they would impose on public schools**

School districts across the state have enough to be concerned with after the Executive's modest Foundation Aid increase coupled with the proposed repeal of the 2007 Foundation Aid formula, without additional changes that would redistribute public dollars to benefit privately-run charter schools.

The Executive Budget would not only provide numerous advantages to charter schools in New York City, it would also unfreeze the charter school basic tuition formula that has appropriately been frozen at the 2010-11 tuition rate. The existing tuition freeze dates back to the 2014-15 enacted budget in which the Legislature and the Executive agreed to a three-year freeze and the establishment of an escalating supplemental tuition formula. Districts were reimbursed for the costs of the supplemental tuition (most district paid \$500 per student in the current school year) on a one-year lag.

For most districts outside of New York City, the Executive proposal would initially reimburse school districts, on a one-year lag, 90 percent of the increased tuition rate which would on an annual basis phase-down over three years at which point state support of these increased costs would dissipate. These added costs would significantly hinder public school financial plans and inevitably lead to a reduction in academic and other opportunities for public school students.

While the most direct impact would be felt by districts sending students to charter schools, every district could be hurt. Since the state funding for reimbursement of the increased tuition costs would be included within the School Aid personal income growth index cap, the total state aid available for all districts would be reduced. This is a negative consequence that must be avoided.

The Legislature should wholesale reject all of these changes. At a minimum, the Legislature should provide for full reimbursement of any increased charter school tuition costs, and exclude such state reimbursement from the personal income growth index. To act otherwise would further strengthen privately run institutions, shielded from many of the same transparency and accountability provisions that regulate public schools, to the detriment of publicly operated and funded school districts.

***The Council opposes these proposals and urge their rejection.***