

May 10, 2019

Honorable Members of the House Education Committee,

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools (PCPCS), I am writing to express our support for House Bills 355, 356, 357 and 358, and I urge you to vote in favor of these bills at Monday's meeting of the Education Committee.


While groundbreaking upon its enactment in 1997, Pennsylvania's Charter School Law has become outdated, and significant reforms are needed to address charter operations and management. The reforms embodied in this package of bills are critical to improving and strengthening the law governing charter schools.

HB 355, sponsored by Rep. Reese, will strengthen and clarify ethics requirements for charter schools, which will only enhance the public's trust in Pennsylvania's charter school community. HB 356, sponsored by Rep. Dowling, will address the issues relating to charter school facilities, including the ability for charters to purchase/lease unused school district buildings and access to district facilities for cyber charter students taking state standardized tests. HB 357, sponsored by Rep. Topper, will establish the process for charter applications, renewals and amendments, which currently results in overly burdensome and lengthy stipulations placed on charters by their authorizers. Finally, HB 358, sponsored by Rep. Marshall, would give charter school students the ability to participate in dual enrollment programs, which their peers in district schools already partake in.

We appreciate the leadership of Representatives Reese, Dowling, Topper and Marshall to introduce these reform bills in order to ensure charter, regional charter and cyber charter schools remain a strong, quality school choice option for the Commonwealth's children and families.

We greatly appreciate your time and hope that we can count on your support for these crucial pieces of legislation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (267) 884-6335 or via email at a.meyers@pacharters.org.

Sincerely,



Ana Meyers
Executive Director