

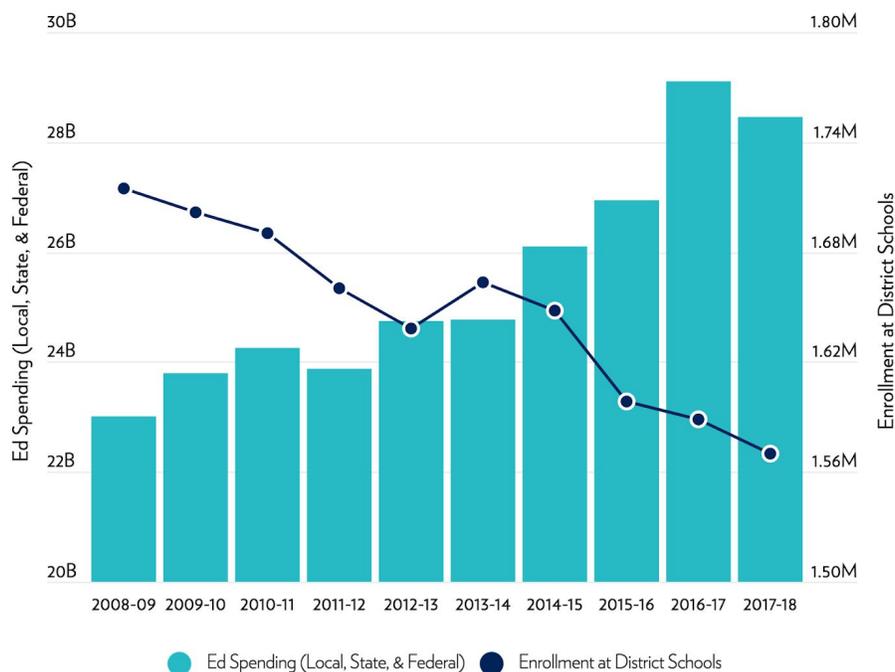
## Education Spending Guide for the Pennsylvania Budget

This budget season, don't be fooled by special interest groups blaming charter schools for their financial woes. Please use this guide to help uncover the lack of accountability for school districts that continue to push Governor Wolf to use public charter schools as scapegoats for their enrollment struggles. District officials and special interest groups want to take options away from Pennsylvania families who are benefiting from charter schools in an attempt to lure back funding. But the question remains, why are families leaving the schools in their districts?

### SCHOOL DISTRICTS CONTINUE TO SEE A DECLINE IN ENROLLMENT

Enrollment in Pennsylvania school districts dropped by 93,000 students from school years 2013-14 to 2017-18, yet school district spending in 2017-18 was the second highest it has been in 10 years at nearly \$28.5 billion. School districts and special interest groups would say that's because they are paying more to charter schools. It's true more families are enrolling students in charter schools, but charter schools don't receive 100 percent of the funding from school districts. So what are they doing with all of that extra money?

### ED SPENDING v. SCHOOL DISTRICT ENROLLMENT



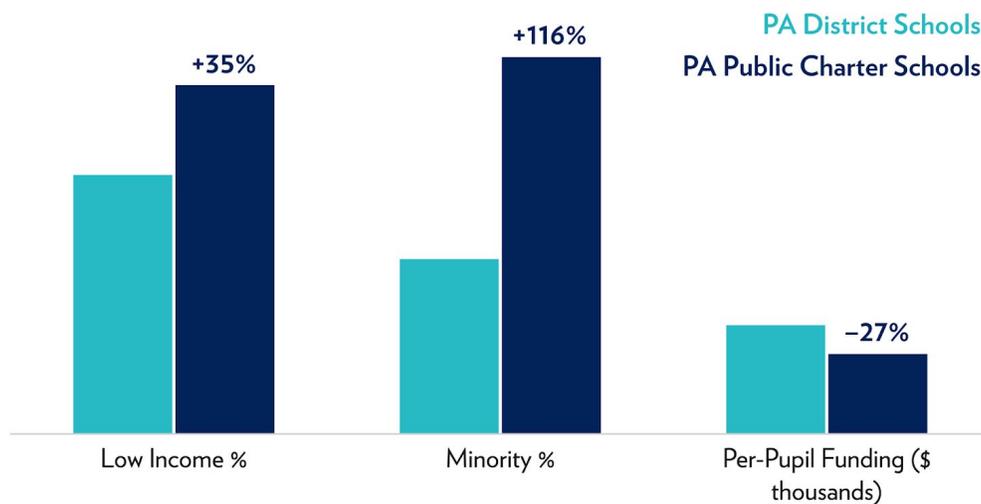
**SOURCES:** Pennsylvania Department of Education Annual Financial Reports, Revenue Data for School Districts; Pennsylvania Department of Education Enrollment Reports.

## UNDERMINING PARENTS AND UNDERVALUING CHARTER STUDENTS

Pressed by special interest groups, Governor Wolf continues to call for harmful reforms that would negatively impact families enrolled at charter schools in order to re-create an educational monopoly. Charter schools serve higher percentages of low-income and minority students and are faced with limitations on per-pupil funding. Students who attend a charter school in Pennsylvania are valued at only 73 percent of the funding their peers receive in the local school district. The remaining 27 percent stays with the district. The math doesn't add up, and yet the governor is undermining the choices parents have made by calling for more charter school funding cuts.

## PA DISTRICT AND CHARTER STUDENTS

*Public charter schools serve a disproportionate amount of **low-income and minority students** while receiving comparatively **less funding**.*



Source: Combination of PA Department of Education AFR Data and Enrollment Reports 2017-18

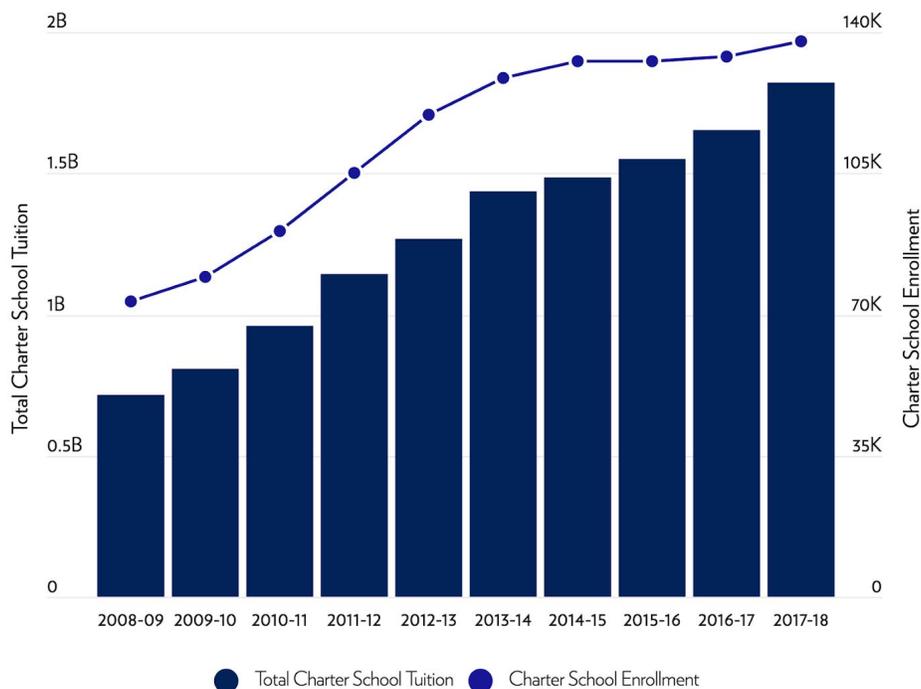


## FAMILIES ARE FLOCKING TO CHARTER SCHOOLS; THE TUITION MATCHES IT

Unlike school districts, public charter schools in Pennsylvania have seen enrollment nearly double since the 2008-09 school year to around 143,000 students in 2019. The funding for those students in 2017-18 was only \$1.8 billion, or 6.4 percent of the \$28.5 billion spent by school districts that year.

Charter school tuition is set in statute and based on a local school district's total expenditures. So the only way that tuition rates increase is if a local district increases its spending, and the only way that a district's total charter school "cost" increases is if more students leave their district for a charter school. We urge you to look at this [one-page fact sheet](#) that outlines funding discrepancies between charters and school districts.

### CHARTER SCHOOL TUITION v. ENROLLMENT



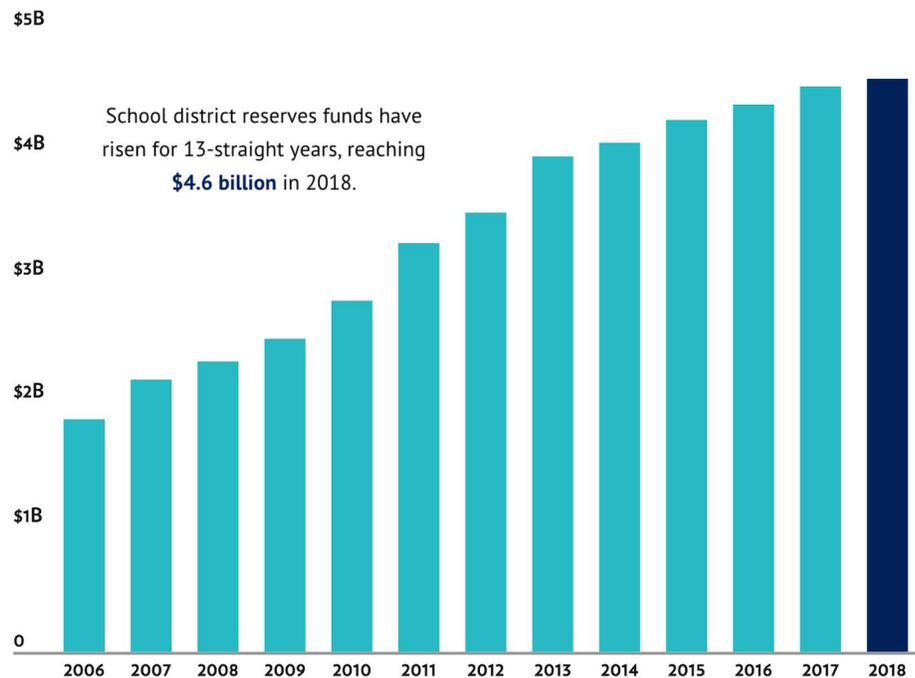
Sources: PA Department of Education AFR Data (Tuition Schedule); Enrollment figures are from PA Coalition of Public Charter Schools.

## SCHOOL DISTRICT RESERVE FUNDS GROW WITH FINANCIAL COMPLAINTS

Instead of using Pennsylvania's public charter schools and their students as scapegoats for their financial woes, school districts should focus on right-sizing their budgets and addressing the reasons students are leaving their schools.

Reserve funds for school districts continue to grow. District officials and special interest groups point fingers for false financial hardships at an alternative solution that some families desperately need, in an attempt to revert Pennsylvania to a one-size-fits-all educational monopoly.

## SCHOOL DISTRICT RESERVES ARE RISING



**SOURCE:** Pennsylvania Department of Education, Detailed Annual Financial Reports, "General Fund Balance 1996-97 to 2017-18." General Fund Balance includes Assigned, Committed, and Unassigned funds.

[Share](#)