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Thank you very much for allowing me to testify today.

Education Voters of PA is a statewide, nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization that supports strong public schools in every community in the commonwealth. Our organization most enthusiastically supports the proposed regulation 6-349: Charter Schools and Cyber Charter Schools, which clarifies elements that are already in Pennsylvania's Charter School Law to improve accountability, equity, quality, and transparency.

This regulation is the end result of a long, thoughtful, and inclusive process that has taken into consideration thousands of stakeholder comments submitted since an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking was first posted in August of 2019.

I will highlight a few key issues in this testimony.

Fiscal Management and Audit Requirements

Charter schools are public schools that received nearly \$3 billion tax dollars in 2020-2021. It is reasonable for these public schools to be required to follow the same generally accepted standards of fiscal management and audit requirements as school districts. The Pennsylvania Department of Education should be able to review their financial records in the same way that they review the records of other public schools.

Requirements for Board of Trustees

The trustees of charter schools should be held to the same basic ethical standards that already apply to school districts. Trustees of charter schools should be required to disclose and abstain from any conflicts of interest. And individuals who violate the public trust and use their position as a public school trustee for personal financial gain should face penalties as proscribed elsewhere in Pennsylvania law.

Application requirements

The proposed minimum charter application requirements will allow charter authorizers to hold prospective charter schools to high academic, fiscal, and administrative standards and help authorizers ensure charter schools are prepared to equitably serve all students.

Enrollment

Finally, proposed regulation 6-349 would make clarifications that take a step toward ensuring that charter schools are equitably and inclusively educating all students, just like school districts. Charter admissions policies and enrollment data should be publicly posted and discriminatory enrollment practices should be ended to ensure all students who want to attend a charter school have equal access to the enrollment process.

The proposed regulation requires a charter school's random selection process to be posted on the school's website in a manner that is accessible to families with limited English proficiency and disabilities. This both clarifies the law and benefits students and families by helping ensure that students cannot be discriminated against in the admission process based on intellectual or physical ability or disability or limited English proficiency.

We most strongly encourage you to approve this regulation. Thank you for your time.

Susan Spicka, Executive Director, Education Voters of PA