

Right to Know requests reveal **\$16.8 million** in cyber charter advertising in 2021-2022

Cybers wasted school property tax dollars on bus wraps, Phillies tickets, TV and radio ads, billboards, and much, much, more!

In 2021-2022, school districts sent **nearly \$1 billion** in tuition payments to cyber charter schools. Because there is no state reimbursement for these costs, cyber charter tuition payments are funded primarily by property taxes.

PA law mandates that the tuition rates school districts pay cyber charter schools far exceed the cost of educating students at home on a computer, leaving cyber charter schools awash in excess money that they waste. And the evidence of this waste is in plain sight.

Education Voters of PA filed Right to Know requests with Pennsylvania's cyber charter schools seeking all invoices for advertising, marketing, and promotions, including invoices for communications firms and third-party vendors contracted to do this work for the 2021-2022 school year. We also asked for information about gift cards and cash payments.

We received responses from ten cyber charters and logged over 2,953 pages of invoices and multiple spreadsheets of transactions. All information is posted in a public Google drive at <https://bit.ly/cyberinvoices>

Cyber Charter School	Reported advertising expenses for 2021-2022 from RTK request
Achievement House CS	\$1,184,658
Agora Cyber CS	\$1,397,722
Pennsylvania Cyber CS	\$2,396,224
Pennsylvania Distance Learning CS	\$561,910.35
Commonwealth Charter Academy CS	\$8,004,727
21st Century Cyber CS	\$564,994
Reach Cyber CS	\$125,308 on gift cards for students Did not provide advertising costs; claimed these were shielded behind a private mgt. company
Pennsylvania Leadership CS	853,768
Pennsylvania Virtual CS	769,860
Insight	1,067,701
Total	\$16,801,564

Turn over for more!



Highlights from the Right to Know Requests

- Commonwealth Charter Academy (CCA) spent **\$3.4 million** on advertising in a three-month period in 2022 (Jan. -Mar.).
- Achievement House Cyber Charter School spent **\$1,306/student** on advertising.
- PA Cyber spent **\$58,000 on swag**, including \$9,725 on owl-shaped erasers, \$6,750 on custom lapel pins, \$8,678 on branded Post-It notes, and \$18,120 on branded magnets.
- PA Cyber spent **\$81,000 on branded clothing and mugs**.
- PA Virtual Charter School spent **\$132,404 on bus wraps and other transit advertising**.
- PA Virtual Charter school spent **\$28,807 on sponsorships of minor league baseball teams**.
- Reach Cyber Charter School spent **\$125,308 on Target gift cards for students**.
- PA Distance Learning Charter School spent **\$80,254 per year on an employee who handles advertising**.
- Insight Cyber Charter School spent \$959,053 on a contract for **undisclosed services with for-profit management company K-12, Inc.**

Ed Voters filed a separate Right to Know Request with Commonwealth Charter Academy (CCA) for invoices for specific parties and events that were advertised on their website or posted on their public Facebook page. We learned that CCA spent:

- More than \$17,000 for family parties at Dave & Busters, Ninja Nook, 814 Lanes and Games, and Lehigh Valley Laser Tag.
- \$60,000 for a three-year sponsorship agreement with the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins and \$6,458 on tickets for CCA families to attend games.
- More than \$75,000 on catering, concessions, parking, and tickets for CCA students and families to attend Philadelphia Phillies baseball games.

It is not thorough or efficient for a state funding system to starve one sector of schools-our school districts-while lavishing extraordinary excess funding that is wasted on another sector- cyber charter schools.

Contact your state lawmakers today and tell them to enact funding reforms that will protect taxpayers from the flagrant waste and abuse of property tax dollars by more closely matching tuition payments to the actual cost of cyber charter education.

Visit <https://bit.ly/cyberwaste> to tell your lawmakers to:

- Enact a flat tuition rate for all cyber charter regular education students of \$9,500 per student.
- More closely align special education tuition rates with charters' actual costs to prevent charter schools from reaping a profit off of tuition payments for students with disabilities.

