

Summary of PA House Bill 1422

Advertising and Sponsorships

- Requires all public schools who advertise to state that the cost of tuition and other costs are covered by taxpayer dollars.
- Prohibits all public schools from paying to sponsor public events such as parades and professional sporting events.

Financial

- Creates a statewide tuition rate for non-special education cyber charter students of \$8,000.
- Automatically increases the statewide tuition rate every three years based on the average rate that school districts raise their local property taxes.
- The statewide tuition rate is adjusted for special education students based on the needs of the student in accordance with the same tiered funding factors used to distribute special education funding to school districts.
- Imposes fund balance limits on cyber charter schools.
- Requires cyber charter schools to approve an annual budget by June 30th each year and make the budget available.
- Prohibits cyber charter schools from paying or reimbursing parents/guardians from educational or field trips as well as offering any cash, gifts or other incentives for enrolling or considering enrolling in a cyber charter school.
- Requires PDE to set a maximum allowable reimbursement for technology services such as internet access.

Management Companies and Foundations

Ensures greater transparency of charter school foundations and management companies by requiring:

- Preventing charter school administrators and their family members from serving on the board of a charter school foundation that supports the charter school.
- Preventing a charter school trustee from being employed by the cyber charter school, a foundation that supports the school, or a management company that serves the school.
- Granting the Department of Education with access to the records and facilities of a foundation that supports the school and management companies that serve the school.
- Requires foundations to make budgets, tax returns and audits available.
- Requires the disclosure of any conflicts of interest between the cyber charter school and a foundation or management company.
- Prohibits cyber charter schools from leasing a facility from a foundation or management company.
- Considers management companies a “local agency” for the purposes of the Right-to-Know law and their employees “public employees” for the purposes of the Ethics Act.

Governance

- Prohibits a school director from a school district or a trustee from another charter school entity from serving on the board of a cyber charter school.

- Explicitly requires cyber charter schools to comply with the Sunshine Law, Right-to-Know Law, and the Ethics Act.
- Requires cyber charter school boards to have at least 7 non-related members. At least one of which must be a parent/guardian of an enrolled student.
- Requires a quorum and a majority vote to take action.

Amendments

- Creates a process for a cyber charter school to request changes to their charter agreement.

Enrollment

- Requires cyber charter schools to verify the residency of enrolling students.
- Removes caps on cyber charter school enrollment except for cyber charter schools designated as comprehensive support and improvement schools.
- Requires cyber charter schools to report the number of newly enrolled students and how many of those students have been identified by the cyber charter school as needing special education.

Wellness Checks

- Requires cyber charter schools to visibly see and communicate with enrolled students at least once per week to verify the student's well-being.

Programs and Services

- Allows cyber charter schools to sell programs, courses or other educational services to school districts.

Access to school facilities for testing

- Requires school districts and other public schools to work with cyber charter schools to provide access to facilities for state testing.

Transportation

- Would require school districts of residence to transport special education students in accordance with the student's IEP.