



Ambridge Area School District

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To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my grave concern over the ongoing costs of charter/cyber schools. The impact of costs for tuition at Ambridge Area School District is nearly 8 million dollars per year. Moreover, our business office recently calculated that 5% of the regular education population sent to cyber/charters were identified special education after their move to the charter or cyber school. This change increased costs of tuition for the district by a half a million dollars. In our school district, over the past three years, the cost of one regular education student at a charter or cyber school has jumped from \$10,408 to \$11,368 and special education costs have increased from \$22,721 to \$27,547. The cost for a significantly involved special education student is the same as for a student receiving only speech services. This alone, makes no common sense.

The tuition money that is provided to the charter/cyber schools does not include the cost of transportation or other peripheral administrative costs assumed by the sending district. Currently we have four dedicated buses running routes for one charter school. Additionally, the cost of transportation is a part of the funding formula and those students enrolled in cyber school don't even use transportation services.

Ambridge Area School District currently educates nearly 2,400 students. Our district has recently implemented a three year, \$500,000 National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI) grant to increase the number of AP courses offered and students taking these courses. In three years we have doubled the number of students taking AP courses and increased the number of students passing the AP exam dramatically. At the K through 3 level, we are implementing a three year grant funded by the federal government that touts the achievement of all students reading at or above grade level by third grade. In one year our students in kindergarten and first grade grew OVER one full grade level.

This is not a school district that is underserving its' population. The effects of charter/cyber schools are rendering us helpless in continuing to provide the type of education that our students deserve. While I understand that charter cyber schools were not only established to afford parents choices, they were also to be a grounds for innovation and creative methods of education. This was an attempt to assist public schools and make improvements. I have never experienced any sharing or camaraderie amongst these entities, and would suggest by the above listed improvements in our District, that these schools could learn a few things from us as well.

As public schools, we merely want equitable and fair treatment by allowing us to utilize our per pupil cost as the amount that we pay for any charter cyber school placement. Many thanks for your ongoing support and voice at the state level.

Yours in Education,

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