

Cyber Charter Schools

Senate Bill 619 (H-3), as reported out of the House Education Committee, seeks to expand enrollment in online learning for Michigan's children without regard for past success or sustainability. We oppose its passage and urge legislators to look at ways of ensuring online learning for all Michigan students that has a track record of success and a real chance at making all students career ready and college capable.

Bill Highlights:

- Removes the current limit of 2 on the number of contracts that can be issued for cyber charter schools.
- Removes the requirements that cyber school students be previously enrolled in public school, and that a cyber school offer all of grades K-12.
- Requires cyber schools to demonstrate experience delivering a quality education program with no definition of what that means.
- *Creates a "limit" of approximately 900,000 pupils in 30 cyber schools in two years.*
- *Price tag: approximately \$7.2 Billion from the School Aid Fund.*

Issues/Concerns:

- Current cyber charter schools were established in fall of 2010. *There is not enough history or experience to demonstrate this pilot program warrants expansion.*
- An analysis of online programs made by the *I-News Network*, a Colorado-based in-depth news consortium, and the nonprofit *Education News Colorado*, **revealed that 50% of the students leave the program within one year and are further behind than when they started. The programs also produce 3 times as many dropouts as they graduate.**
- Cyber schools get a full foundation allowance with no oversight or accountability which puts Michigan's students at risk.
- Cyber schools do not comply with the same transparency, curriculum, or grade level content standards as community-governed schools.
- K-12, Inc. made a \$522 million profit in 2011. That is \$336 per student.

- It is impossible to ensure cyber pupils are doing their own work.
- **SB 619 merely opens up the floodgates for inexperienced vendors to move into Michigan and make a profit.**
- Let's learn from Colorado, Ohio, and Pennsylvania's mistakes and say "**NO**" to cyber school expansion.

Senate Bill 619 has passed the Senate and is currently on the House floor.

bk:opeiu42afl-cio – 2/8/12