

12-2022 - *Cyber charter school funding needs to be revised*

Although the 2015 revision of the school funding formula is based on enrollment, problems persist with cyber charter school funding. The problem is that our state's 14 cyber charter schools receive the same funding as the public schools even though they are online operations with lower expenses than brick-and-mortar schools. In Pennsylvania, schools receive funding on a per-student basis, which means that both brick-and-mortar and cyber charter schools receive the same per-pupil funds from the district, minus certain categories of spending and federal funds. When a child leaves for a charter school, district expenses do not decrease; "fixed costs" remain, such as debt, salaries, building maintenance, utilities, and transportation.

Thus, cyber charters receive funding that is approximately double their actual cost. These excess public funds are used for executive compensation, advertising, and management fees, while student achievement and graduation rates in cyber charters remain considerably lower than regular public schools. To date, no cyber charter school has ever achieved a passing score on the state school performance profile rating system. To limit the non-educational spending, Pennsylvania needs a formula for cyber charter schools that eliminates excesses and reflects the actual cost of operation. More information on this issue can be found at [Education Voters PA Charter Reform Priorities](#).

--Carol Hodes, AAUW State College Education Chair