



NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS



NORTH CAROLINA
COALITION FOR
CHARTER SCHOOLS

April 24, 2023

House Education - K-12 Committee
North Carolina General Assembly
Legislative Building
16 West Jones Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Chairpersons Blackwell, Cotham, and Torbett, and Members of the House Education - K-12 Committee:

We write to urge support for two bills on the House Education - K-12 Committee's agenda for Tuesday, April 25: H.B. 219, Charter School Omnibus, and H.B. 618, Charter School Review Board. Both bills would have significant positive implications for the public charter school movement in North Carolina, favorably impacting charter operations, sustainability, and growth.

Currently, public charter school students in North Carolina receive substantially less local funding than their peers in public district schools. According to the nonprofit organization BEST NC, public charter school students received *37% less local funding*, on average, than district school students during the 2020-21 school year. The current funding model contravenes the intent of the original charter statute and creates inequalities among some of our state's public school students. H.B. 219 would fix this disparity in local funding, requiring local administrators to fund public charter school and district school students equally.

We believe that public school funding should be for students, not systems. All public school students are equally important and are therefore worthy of equal taxpayer funding. Some district administrators have argued against equal funding on the grounds that their schools offer services and programs that public charter schools don't offer. Such an argument would only have force, however, if district schools offered such programs *while charter schools offered none*. In fact, charter schools offer *different* programming, and they do so to meet their legal mandate to utilize "different and innovative teaching methods." It is unreasonable for bill opponents to allege that public charter schools deserve less funding because they offer different and innovative programs. H.B. 219 would thus balance the scales, ensuring funding fairness for *all* of our public school students.

In addition, H.B. 618 would introduce another important change into the state's charter movement by streamlining and expediting the charter approval and renewal process. The current process—which requires review and recommendations from the Charter Schools Advisory Board (CSAB), followed by review and approval by the State Board of Education (SBE)—is duplicative, slow, and time-consuming.

Converting CSAB into a Charter School Review Board with the authority to approve, renew, and revoke charters—as H.B. 618 would do—would introduce much-needed efficiencies into the state's current application and renewal process. Such a shift would also alleviate an already substantial workload for the State Board of Education. Moreover, in designating the State Board as an appellate entity, H.B. 618

would provide due process for the state's charter applicants and schools—creating a pathway for them to appeal the Review Board's decisions on new charters, renewals, revocations, and amendments.

In sum, both H.B. 219 and H.B. 618 will introduce changes that will benefit public charter schools, thereby strengthening public education in our state. As a result, we urge you to support these bills.

Please feel free to contact us if we can provide any additional information. Thank you for your service to the citizens of North Carolina and for your ongoing support of our state's public charter schools. We look forward to continuing our work together in the future.

Sincerely,



Lindalyn Kakadelis
Executive Director
North Carolina Coalition for Charter Schools



Rhonda Dillingham
Executive Director
North Carolina Association for Public Charter Schools

cc: Speaker Tim Moore
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Rep. Diane Wheatley, Vice Chair
Rep. David Willis, Vice Chair
Rep. Cynthia Ball
Rep. Brian Biggs
Rep. Laura Budd
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