

Impacts of PA Cyber Charter Schools on Public School District

Uncovering what it really means to have “school choice” in PA



“Excellence by CHOICE, Not by Chance”

Origin and Concept

- PA Charter Law adopted 1997--- Amended for Cyber in 2002
- Premise:
 - Improve learning
 - Create “opportunities” (competition)
 - Foster innovative teaching
 - Create additional professional opportunities for teachers
- Exempted from many Public School mandates

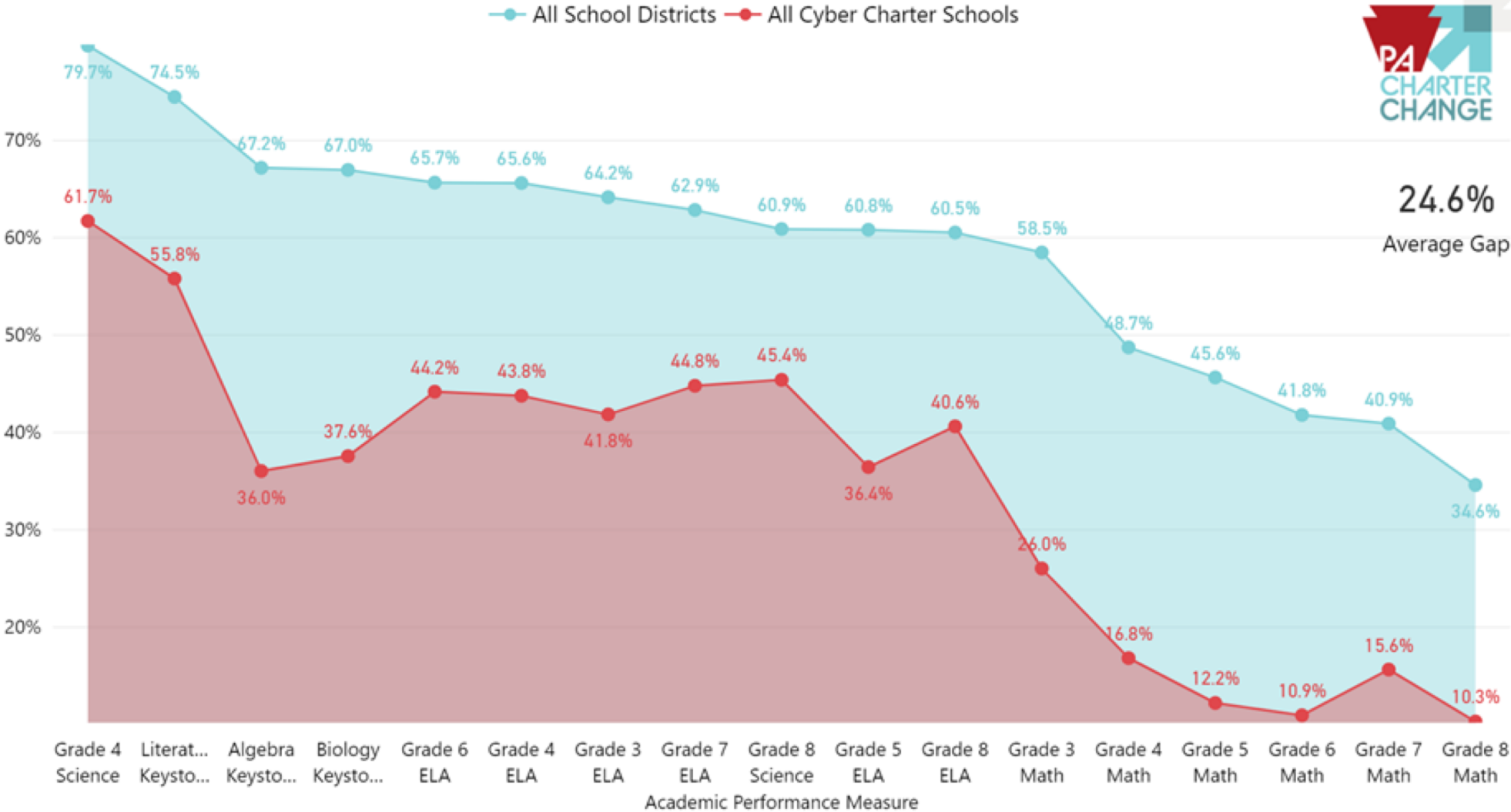
Outside Cyber Charters: Promoting school choice OR Increasing Cyber Charter profits?

- Have freedom from some mandates
 - Able to “select” or deny participants (students)
 - Not responsible for transportation
 - No requirements of the # of hours- promoting flexibility
- 25% of teachers do NOT have to be appropriately certified
- Teacher evaluation is charter school selected – not State required
- Advertise “Free” tuition but comes directly from public school budgets
- Ability to hold substantial reserves as evidenced through AFRs
- Large **marketing & lobbying** campaigns using taxpayer funds
- Students are eligible to participate in “home district” extracurriculars – “fight” for reimbursement of cost.



Academic Performance (2018-2019)

Proficiency Gap Between School Districts and Charter Schools on State Assessments



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Graduation Rates

District	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	5 Year Ave	2020-21 EASD Students	Potential Dropouts
Capital Area School for the Arts	95.4%	93.8%	87.8%	98.0%	98.2%	94.6%	1	0
Elizabethtown Area SD	92.3%	96.1%	90.5%	91.4%	92.2%	92.5%		
Pennsylvania Virtual CS	77.4%	81.0%	67.8%	78.0%	75.7%	76.0%	9	2
Pennsylvania Leadership CS	69.7%	71.4%	70.8%	75.5%	77.2%	72.9%	15	4
Commonwealth Charter Academy CS	73.2%	65.8%	68.2%	65.7%	53.5%	65.3%	68	24
Reach Cyber CS					62.7%	62.7%	19	7
21st Century Cyber CS	66.7%	66.7%	62.2%	54.2%	61.3%	62.2%	7	3
Pennsylvania Cyber CS	58.1%	54.6%	50.3%	49.6%	49.5%	52.4%	15	7
Agora Cyber CS	46.2%	41.2%	45.2%	48.7%	49.4%	46.1%	19	10
						62.5%	153	57



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Graduation Rates

What does this mean for children living in EASD & attending Cyber Charter Schools?

5 Year Ave	2020-21 EASD Students	Potential Dropouts
62.5%	153	57

More than 1 out 3 our children attending Outside Cyber Charter Programs will NOT Graduate!



SUMMARY

- Outside cybers have more flexibility AND demonstrate poor academic results- lower achievement scores & graduation rates
- Districts providing their own cyber options for students must still pay for students who attend outside cyber schools. *(If it's about choice, this is incongruent with non public institutions. Parents wanting a different experience for their child, outside of cyber education, must pay for it themselves.)*
- Irresponsible/cloaked funding mechanism --- creates financial turmoil for School districts with little control on enrollment when already operating their own cyber program
- Bad incubator of new ideas --- 18 years of unnoteworthy innovation.
- Stretches budgetary decisions regarding student experiences in order to address cyber costs