



Monroe County School Boards Association

Position Paper: Charter Schools, Vouchers, and the Cost to Public Education

The NYS Constitution states, “The legislature shall provide for the maintenance and support of a system of free common schools, wherein all the children of this state may be educated.” (Article XI, §1) Therefore, the NYS Constitution mandates that our system of “free common schools” not be undercut by the diversion of funds to alternative “choice” school options such as charter schools, vouchers or education tax credits.

MCSBA requests: Our membership urges the Legislature to STOP funding choice options that undercut the financial stability of public districts until public schools are fully resourced to help ALL children succeed.

- **Public schools:** Our public schools are designed to support ALL students succeed, with oversight by local elected boards and legislation enacted by state elected officials.
- **Charter schools:** Despite operating for over 20 years, charter schools show no average improvement in achievement over public schools and spend public funds without being elected by or accountable to taxpayers.
- **Taxpayer oversight:** Taxpayers have no say in how voucher dollars are spent.

	ISSUES
Charter Schools	<p>Despite operating for over 20 years, charter schools show no improvement over public school student achievement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NYSED report cards show Charters are more segregated and serve fewer high-needs students than traditional public schools. ● Charter boards are not elected by taxpayers, yet they spend public tax dollars. ● A state-mandated report on Charter effectiveness, due in 2014, has <i>still</i> not been produced. ● When students return to public districts mid-year, the funding does not follow them, disrupting district stability. ● Charters were legislated to be innovation centers, however it is undetermined if charters have met this charge due to a lack of data provided.
Transportation	<p>Public districts are required to transport students to private and parochial schools, creating excessive financial burdens.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Some districts run more bus routes for private/parochial students than for their own students, creating inefficiencies. ● The national driver shortage drives up costs, while districts are forced to compete for labor to fulfill this mandate.
Tax Credits	<p>Tax credits allow a dollar-for-dollar credit for state income tax for donations to school districts, education foundations and private scholarships. There is no legal obligation or expectation that NYS support non-public sectarian schools or help private schools solicit donations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● These credits directly reduce state income tax revenue available for public education. ● This mechanism funnels money to private and parochial schools, bypassing the language in the NYS Constitution.
Vouchers	<p>Vouchers provide public dollars for private choices, often without public oversight.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Using public money for religious schools violates the NYS Constitution on supporting institutions under religious control. ● Vouchers rarely cover the full cost of private education, effectively excluding the neediest families and subsidizing those already in the private system. ● Vouchers do not ameliorate the issues of poverty or equity but would more likely be used by families already accessing the private school system. ● Taxpayers have no oversight into how voucher dollars are spent.