

SB786 – The Open Campus Initiative Expansion Reads Like Specialized Legislation Written to Benefit a Specific Cyber Charter School

SB 786 appears to be improper legislation to enrich a specific cyber charter when lower cost alternatives exist

Commonwealth Charter Academy (CCA) is currently pitching “Open Campus” online courses and services to school districts.

On September 14, 2021, CCA made a presentation to school district official about its “Open Campus Options,” including new paid subscription models.

The Open Campus Expansion bill would allow CCA to collect fees from school districts, something that it cannot do under current law.

SB 786 wastes local tax dollars on redundant and more costly infrastructure

Intermediate Units (IUs) already provide full and part-time cyber education opportunities for 25,000 students including over 10,000 unique courses.

Because IUs develop online courses using public tax dollars, they pass the savings on to school districts by offering them at very low cost.

There is no reason to build redundant infrastructure when the General Assembly has already created the statewide system of IUs that offers online options at a lower cost to taxpayers.

There are no legal, administrative, or technical barriers preventing cybers from sharing their curriculum with other school entities on a non-fee basis.

Cybers currently receive 95% of their revenues from local school districts. Sharing curriculum on a non-fee basis is reasonable because local taxpayers already foot the bill for course development and the amount of unassigned fund balance held by cyber charters more than tripled in 2020.

SB786 precludes school districts from creating Open Campus Initiatives with other school districts

The original intent of the Open Campus Initiative was to encourage partnerships between school districts to increase access to high quality curricula through the use of technology. As currently drafted, the bill allows districts to enter into partnerships with charter schools, cyber charter schools or regional charter schools but not other school districts.

It is counterproductive to prohibit school districts from forming new Open Campus Initiatives when over 90 percent have created scalable online educational programs.

Welcome to CCA!
September 14, 2021

Agenda

- 10:30 a.m. – Welcome, introductions, what is CCA
- 10:45 a.m. – What we're presenting and why
- **11 a.m. – Open Campus timeline and courses**
- 12 p.m. – Lunch and tour
- 1 p.m. – Adjourn

Subscription Models

Per-Course Seat Model
Edro (CCA tenancy)
XYZ Course Offering
CCA Teacher
Subscribed students
Good fit for smaller subscription

Per-Course Model
Edro (CCA tenancy)
XYZ course offering
Dedicated CCA teacher
Subscribed students
Good fit for large subscription (entire section)