

The Truth About Charters

GOVERNANCE

OVERSIGHT

ACCOUNTABILITY

•The financial burden of providing and paying for charter school space and services for co-locations will be crippling. This will be especially difficult once the cap of charter schools is reached. As of now there are currently 28 charter schools left on the cap in NYC, but there will be "more" because existing charters can expand grades without being included in the cap. The city is required to find the resources to pay. Only after \$40 million is spent on private charter rent, will the state contribute to an undetermined amount of assistance. We need funding policies that will support the facilities and space needed for the approximately 93.4% of public school children learning in overcrowded and substandard facilities.

•Charters schools receive MORE per pupil funding than public schools. This creates even greater inequity in our school system favoring the approximately 7.6% of NYC's school children who currently attend charter schools. Combine that with the millions in private funding charters receive from millionaire and billionaire donors who have an interest in privatizing our education system and the goal becomes clear: undermine and dismantle every child's right to go to the school of his or her choice. The new policy will force students to fill out an application, win a lottery, and adhere to undemocratic governance and a set of rules that leave families vulnerable to discrimination and push-out, not to mention increased segregation in an already segregated school system. We need policies that seek to create equity and increase the integration of our school system, not make it worse.

•The new law requiring charter space puts the expansion of public schools in New York City at risk because it encourages charter school expansion over the expansion of public schools. New York City schools have some of the highest class sizes and most overcrowding in the state. We need support to help end this crisis, not make it worse.

•The financial sustainability of our school system is at risk. As more public dollars are funneled into education corporations and charter schools, fewer public dollars are available for our public schools. At a certain point, and we have heard the "tipping point" is 10% enrollment in charter schools in NYC, we will reach a financial crisis that will make it impossible to balance the funding needs for both charters and public schools, thus allowing the kind of wholesale transfer of public schools to charter operators as we have seen in New Orleans, Philadelphia, now encroaching on Camden, and state-wide in Tennessee.

Governor Cuomo not only allowed the charter school windfall to be central to this year's budget, he was one of, if not the, architect(s). The self-proclaimed "student lobbyist" is truly a charter-hedge-funder lobbyist beholden to campaign dollars in an election year and further influenced by his national political aspirations.

Legislators from around the state, save a brave few such as state Senator Montgomery and Harlem's Senator Perkins whose constituents have experienced the horrors and inequity of charter co-locations and expansion first hand, said precious little and took no stand in rejecting this budget.

Our Mayor, who ran on putting an end to the favor of charters at the expense of our public schools and received a clear mandate to do so by the voters in our city, was at the very least powerless to stop the giveaway and at worst raised no vocal objection, perhaps considering funding for universal Pre-K a worthy enough win, even though charters will also have the right to open Pre-K.

The true student-lobbyists, parents, students, rank-and-file educators and community members, must stand together to demand full funding and support for our public schools. We must make it clear that an investment in a system that serves ALL children that is governed by the people, not private unaccountable and non-transparent interests, is vital to the health and success of our children.

We have learned from our personal experiences that charter space support and expansion in communities results in a negative impact on the community itself, causing unnecessary strain and tension, as well as on the existing schools. But equally important, because these issues were at our doorstep, we also understand the deep systemic issues surrounding charters: the drive to privatize our public education system, the impact of charter push-out, the impact of a two-tiered system where one school is privileged over another, and the bigger picture of the undermining of public education and all that entails from worker protections, to funding, to the way children are treated.

MORE stands in solidarity with the approximately 93.4% of families who want high quality neighborhood schools for their children. We stand by our teachers involved in this fight. We cannot achieve the promise of public education if the funding, facilities and services we need to provide are at-risk. Cuomo does not stand for our children. He stands for his own political interests fueled by charter school dollars and we WILL hold him accountable!

WHO'S FAILING WHOM?

INJUSTICE
ANYWHERE
IS A THREAT
TO JUSTICE
EVERYWHERE.

REVEREND. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

