

2013-15 Budget Issue Paper Charter School Authorizing Board

[LFB 2013-15 Budget Summary: Page 381, #9]

Governor's Proposal:

Create a charter school oversight board, which would have responsibility for approving new independent charter school authorizers. Authorizers would be allowed to approve independent charter schools anywhere in the state of Wisconsin funded 100 percent by a reduction in school districts' general school aids.

Allow pupils who reside in a school district whose membership is at least 4,000 and had at least 2 public schools in the district rated in the bottom two performance categories in the most recent school report card to attend independent charter schools anywhere in Wisconsin. Allow pupils who reside in all other districts to attend independent charter schools anywhere in Wisconsin only with the approval of their resident school board.

DPI Position: **Oppose and request to be removed from budget.**

Rationale for Opposition:

❖ **Erosion of local control**

Wisconsin has been a charter school success story. Fifteen years ago, Wisconsin had 17 charter schools that enrolled around 1,100 students. Today, we have 237 charter schools located in 97 districts across the state educating more than 43,000 students. Wisconsin ranks in the top ten states nationwide for charter schools, creating new educational options for children and parents. Of these schools, 216 are established in local communities, by locally elected school board members, and accountable to local communities.

The creation of a statewide board with responsibility for approving new independent charter school authorizers is a direct erosion of local control for Wisconsin communities. Unelected officials will be authorizing entities to contract for the creation of independent charter schools anywhere in the state, with local taxpayers to cover the costs.

❖ **Property tax increase**

Per-pupil payments for independent charter schools are taken as a "first draw" against general school aids. This means that for every pupil that attends an independent charter school, Wisconsin school districts receive a proportional reduction in school aids, regardless of whether that pupil resided in their district or not. This reduction can be made up only through increased property taxes in school districts around the state. The total reduction in state aids for independent charter schools in the Governor's budget request is more than \$67 million in FY14 and \$80 million in FY15, which will only increase as independent charter schools become established statewide.

The map below shows the \$59 million in general aid reductions statewide in the current 2012-13 school year. These reductions will continue to grow in school districts across the state as more and more independent charter schools are established.

FY 2013 Additional General Aid Reduction for 2r Charters by District

