



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

FISCAL NOTE

HOUSE BILL NO. 357

PRINTERS NO. 2108

PRIME SPONSOR: Topper

COST / (SAVINGS)

FUND	FY 2018/19	FY 2019/20
General Fund	\$0	See Fiscal Impact

SUMMARY:

House Bill 357 amends the Public School Code primarily concerning processes and procedures related to charter schools. It would take effect in 60 days.

ANALYSIS:

This legislation makes several revisions and additions to provisions relating to charter schools found throughout the Public School Code. Below is a list of the sections of the School Code added or significantly amended by this legislation.

Section 1313.2 Transfer of Attendance Records to Another School Entity or Nonpublic School –

This new section concerns the transfer of attendance records to another school entity or nonpublic school. It requires a copy of a student's attendance record be transmitted to the school entity or nonpublic school by the school entity or nonpublic school of origin whenever a student transfers within the Commonwealth. The transfer of records must take place in accordance with the provisions established in the section, and must include a student's unexcused absences.

Section 1703-A Definitions – Definitions are added or changed for the following terms:

Administrator, Assessment, Charter school entity, Charter school foundation, Chief administrator, Cyber charter school, Educational management service provider, Local board of school directors, and School district of residence. The term, "Chief executive officer" is deleted.

Section 1717-A Establishment of Charter School – Changes are made to this section concerning open meetings and best practices.

Section 1719-A Contents of Application -- This legislation also makes changes to the School Code designed to improve the chartering process. It requires the Department of Education (PDE) to develop an application form that must be used by all initial and renewal charter applicants, school boards and the Department. Detailed requirements for the form are enumerated in this section.

Section 1720-A Term and Form of Charter -- Allows charters to be granted for an initial term of 3 to 5 years, followed by 5-year renewal terms. This section also establishes a charter renewal process.

Section 1720.1-A-Amendments - This new section establishes a process for charter schools to amend their charters. Charter schools must request charter amendments by October 15 of the school year prior to which the amendment would take effect, and timelines are established for local school boards to respond to these requests. A charter school or regional charter school which has no restrictions on enrollment expansion must notify the local board of school directors if it intends to expand enrollment by more than 10% no later than December 15 of the school year prior to the school year in which enrollment would be expanded.

Section 1723-A Admission and Enrollment Requirements - Changes to this section concern charter school entity admission and enrollment requirements and preferences.

Section 1727-A Liability and Security - Changes to this section add insurance requirements for charter schools.

Section 1743-A Cyber Charter School Requirements and Prohibitions - Changes to this section allow the parent or guardian of more than one child enrolled in the same cyber charter school to elect not to receive a separate computer, monitor and printer for each enrolled child.

Section 1745-A Establishment of Cyber Charter School - This section provides that changes in this legislation do not preclude school districts and intermediate units from offering online instruction that is not recognized as a cyber charter school, and allows local boards of school directors and intermediate units to establish cyber charter schools pursuant to the procedures and requirements of the Charter School Law. It also permits a cyber charter school to request amendments to its charter by filing with PDE using the same process available to charter and regional charter schools.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Enactment of this legislation will have no adverse impact on Commonwealth funds.

Some of the additional responsibilities from this legislation placed on school districts and charter schools could have a fiscal impact on those entities. However, the extent of this impact will vary greatly based on the individual circumstances of each school district and charter school.

It is estimated that other duties and responsibilities assigned to PDE in this legislation will have a minimal fiscal impact that can be absorbed within the currently available and budgeted funds of the Department.

PREPARED BY: Jeff Miller
House Appropriations Committee (R)

DATE: June 12, 2019

Estimates are calculated using the best information available. Actual costs and revenue impact incurred may vary from estimates.