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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE BILL

No. 1412 Session of  
2013

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INTRODUCED BY CHRISTIANA, HELM, MILLARD, MILLER, SIMMONS, DAVIS,  
DAVIDSON, SWANGER, TOEPEL, RAPP, MURT, KAUFFMAN, TRUITT,  
BLOOM, PETRI, AUMENT, GROVE, QUINN, BROOKS, BENNINGHOFF, COX,  
DENLINGER, EVERETT AND MOUL, MAY 16, 2013

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, MAY 16, 2013

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AN ACT

1 Providing for the establishment of a searchable budget database-  
2 driven Internet website detailing certain information  
3 concerning taxpayer expenditures and investments by charter  
4 school entities.

5 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
6 hereby enacts as follows:

7 Section 1. Short title.

8 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Charter  
9 School Entity Web Accountability and Transparency (CharterWATCH)  
10 Act.

11 Section 2. Definitions.

12 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall  
13 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the  
14 context clearly indicates otherwise:

15 "Charter school." As defined in section 1703-A of the act of  
16 March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code  
17 of 1949.

18 "Charter school entity." A charter school, regional charter

1 school or cyber charter school.

2 "Cyber charter school." As defined in section 1703-A of the  
3 act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public  
4 School Code of 1949.

5 "Department." The Department of Education of the  
6 Commonwealth.

7 "Entity." Any of the following:

8 (1) An individual, corporation, association, union,  
9 limited liability company or limited liability partnership.

10 (2) Any other legal business entity, including a  
11 nonprofit, a grantee, a contractor and a sole proprietor.

12 (3) Any political subdivision or other local government  
13 entity.

14 "Funding action or expenditure." A payment by a charter  
15 school entity to include:

16 (1) A grant.

17 (2) A loan.

18 (3) Reimbursement.

19 (4) Payment made pursuant to the purchase of goods and  
20 services, including employee salaries, or to a construction  
21 or other contract.

22 (5) Payment of debt service.

23 (6) Payments made pursuant to a formula.

24 (7) Payments to political subdivisions or other local  
25 government entities.

26 "Funding source." A charter school entity's general fund or  
27 special funds.

28 "Public School Code of 1949." The act of March 10, 1949  
29 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949.

30 "Regional charter school." As defined in section 1703-A of

1 the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public  
2 School Code of 1949.

3 Section 3. Searchable database.

4 (a) Development.--By December 31, 2014, the department shall  
5 develop, implement and maintain a single, searchable, public  
6 Internet website to be called CharterWATCH.

7 (b) Internet website contents.--The Internet website  
8 required pursuant to subsection (a) shall provide the following  
9 information for each charter school entity:

10 (1) The name and address of the charter school entity.

11 (2) The amount of funding received by the charter school  
12 entity from Federal, State, local and private sources and  
13 deposited in the charter school entity's general fund or  
14 special fund during the previous month.

15 (3) The name and address of the entity receiving a  
16 payment from the charter school entity pursuant to a funding  
17 action or expenditure.

18 (4) A description and the amount of each funding action  
19 or expenditure.

20 (5) The funding source for each funding action or  
21 expenditure.

22 (6) The expected and achieved performance outcomes from  
23 the funding action or expenditure, if available.

24 (7) A counter to show the number of times the Internet  
25 website is accessed.

26 (8) A link to each charter school entity's Internet  
27 website, where available.

28 (9) The total number of individuals employed by each  
29 charter school entity as of the 15th day of the previous  
30 month.

1 (10) For each individual employed by a charter school  
2 entity, the following:

3 (i) Name.

4 (ii) Position or title.

5 (iii) Current annual salary, based on the employee's  
6 pay schedule and current salary.

7 (iv) Any additional compensation received by the  
8 individual and the basis for such compensation,  
9 including, but not limited to, duties as a coach or  
10 activity advisor.

11 (v) Compensation, as defined in section 303(a)(1)(i)  
12 of the act of March 4, 1971 (P.L.6, No.2), known as the  
13 Tax Reform Code of 1971, paid by the charter school  
14 entity.

15 (c) Exemption.--Notwithstanding any other provision of this  
16 act, records not subject to disclosure under the act of February  
17 14, 2008 (P.L.6, No.3), known as the Right-to-Know Law, shall  
18 not be included on the Internet website.

19 (d) Access.--The Internet website shall allow the public to  
20 search for and aggregate information at no cost.

21 (e) Maintenance.--Information for a fiscal year shall remain  
22 on the Internet website for a period of no less than eight years  
23 from the date of posting.

24 Section 4. Administration.

25 (a) Charter school entity requirements.--Each charter school  
26 entity shall cooperate with the department. The following shall  
27 apply:

28 (1) Each charter school entity shall provide the  
29 department with all information regarding Federal, State,  
30 local and private funding received and all funding actions or

1 expenditures as required under this act at the time the  
2 funding is received or the funding action or expenditure is  
3 paid by the charter school entity.

4 (2) Each charter school entity shall provide the  
5 department with complement and employment compensation  
6 information as required under this act prior to the end of  
7 each month.

8 (b) Accuracy.--Each charter school entity is responsible for  
9 verifying the accuracy and completeness of information submitted  
10 to the department.

11 (c) Format.--Each charter school entity shall establish and  
12 maintain the information required to be posted under section 3  
13 in a manner prescribed by the department. The department shall  
14 consult with charter school entities to develop the format to be  
15 utilized.

16 (d) Penalty.--The charter of any charter school entity that  
17 fails to comply with the provisions of this act shall not be  
18 renewed.

19 Section 5. Report to Governor and General Assembly.

20 The department shall prepare an annual report containing  
21 statistical information on the usage and performance of the  
22 Internet website. The report shall contain frequency of user  
23 access of the Internet website, types of data being accessed and  
24 Internet website performance. The report shall be submitted to  
25 the Governor, the chairman and minority chairman of the  
26 Appropriations Committee of the Senate, the chairman and  
27 minority chairman of the Appropriations Committee of the House  
28 of Representatives, the chairman and minority chairman of the  
29 Education Committee of the Senate and the chairman and minority  
30 chairman of the Education Committee of the House of

1 Representatives by March 30 of each year, beginning March 30,  
2 2016.  
3 Section 6. Effective date.  
4 This act shall take effect immediately.