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Reach Cyber Charter School Roundtable with State Legislators Discussed Impact of Proposed Cyber Charter Funding Cuts

Enola, Pa. (Nov. 7, 2025) – Public cyber charter students and their caretakers, teachers, and education leaders from across Pennsylvania gathered on Wednesday, Nov. 4 at [Reach Cyber Charter School](#) for a roundtable discussion with state legislators about how proposed state budget cuts could impact the 65,000+ students enrolled in cyber charters across the state.

The latest funding cut to public cyber charter schools, being proposed as part of the 2025-26 state budget, would result in a decrease in funding for cyber charter students anywhere from \$175 million to \$300 million. During Wednesday's event, cyber charter school leaders warned that this cut would force cutbacks in staffing, student services and academic programming, as well as the ultimate closure of some schools in the future. Panelists at the event emphasized that such reductions would disproportionately affect students who depend on public cyber charters for academic, medical, or personal reasons.

Representative Barbara Gleim (R-199), who hosted the panel discussion, highlighted the fact that this proposed cut would be in addition to a significant funding reduction last year.

"Approximately 65,000 students are served by 14 public cyber charter schools in Pennsylvania," Gleim said. "These schools endured a more than \$100 million cut in the 2024-25 state budget, and Gov. Josh Shapiro is pushing for an even deeper cut as part of his 2025-26 spending proposal...all while claiming to be a supporter of school choice."

Cyber charter teachers and administrators discussed how the cyber model allows for personalized instruction, flexibility, and self-discovery – benefits that could be jeopardized if significant cuts are enacted.

"My dad originally was not in favor of cyber school," said Caroline Karpew, a 16-year-old senior at Reach Cyber who switched from brick-and-mortar schooling. "But then he started seeing a change in my personality...my overall wellbeing...my grades improving. I started coming out of my room more often, and my self-esteem was starting to come up after I got to pick and choose what relationships I want to nourish and who I want to see. I think that's a really big aspect that a lot of people don't talk about enough."

“I like that I get to work with so many professionals to help kids,” said Melanie Bieleski, a middle school science teacher at Reach Cyber. “School counselors, social workers, interventionists, learning support teachers...we really can coordinate with everybody in advance levels of training on how best to support each individual child. I get to teach the individual whole child, not just hope that what I'm doing lands for the 30 kids that are in my room that day.”

Joining Rep. Gleim was Senator Dawn Keefer (R-92), Representative Marc Anderson (R-92), Representative Joe D’Orsie (R-47), and a member of Representative Sheryl Delozier’s (R-88) office. Panel participants also included leaders from Pennsylvania Families for Education Choice, the Pennsylvania Manufacturers’ Association – whose president and CEO, David M. Taylor, also serves as board president of Reach Cyber – and the Commonwealth Foundation.

Also represented were Jane Swan, CEO of Reach Cyber Charter School, Dr. Debra Heath-Thornton, CEO of PA Virtual Charter School, and Dr. Malynda Maurer, CEO of Central PA Digital Learning Foundation.

“Events like these give policymakers a clearer picture of how public cyber charter schools support student success across Pennsylvania, including our own at Reach Cyber,” said Swan. “Our goal is to ensure that every student continues to have access to a public education that fits their unique needs. We will continue to advocate for our students, our families, and our employees to ensure the decision-makers in Harrisburg know who they are hurting if they enact these most recent funding proposals.”

Reach Cyber serves nearly 6,000 students in grades K-12, provides a personalized curriculum designed specifically for the online setting. With a strong focus on [STEM learning](#), built-in [career exploration](#) opportunities, and both [real-time and self-paced instruction](#), students can tailor their education to fit their needs – whether they require academic support, accelerated coursework, or flexibility to balance commitments outside the classroom.

Rep. Gleim concluded the series of panels acknowledging the importance of hearing directly from cyber charter students and faculty.

“Sometimes we don’t always control what House committees actually bring up in a hearing or who they invite, so this was long overdue. Hopefully we can work together in the near future to uplift and hold on to our cyber charter schools,” Gleim said.

About Reach Cyber Charter School

Reach Cyber Charter School is a STEM-focused online public charter school for K-12 students in Pennsylvania. Reach Cyber provides students with a high-quality curriculum infused with STEM learning designed specifically for a virtual learning environment. At Reach Cyber, students have a dedicated and expansive support system of teachers, counselors and family mentors to help them reach their potential. Reach Cyber allows students to personalize their education, offering traditional, accelerated, and yearlong pacing options that support students’ individualized needs. Stay up-to-date with Reach Cyber on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#). For more information, call 717-704-8437 or visit www.ReachCyber.org.