



Resolution Supporting Senate Bill 34 and House Bill 526 for School Districts Providing Their Own Cyber Learning Programs

WHEREAS, a growing number of school districts across the state are responding to the need to successfully operate high-quality, full-time cyber education programs within their traditional district programs that provide flexibility and personalized options as a choice for students and families; and

WHEREAS, school district cyber programs include rigorous curriculum aligned with the state academic standards and taught by appropriately certified teachers; and school districts can provide their cyber education students with regular and special education instruction and services, tutoring, career counseling and other support as necessary; and

WHEREAS, cyber education programs operated by school districts provide students with a smooth transition to and from the traditional school setting; and give students opportunities to participate in district instructional courses and resources; and students may choose to participate in extracurricular activities such as athletics, band, music, clubs and social activities such as homecoming and prom; and students may graduate in district ceremonies and receive a district diploma; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth is the sole authorizer of cyber charter schools, yet the tuition costs for students attending these schools are borne by school districts and local taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, the majority of cyber schools have consistently placed in the bottom 5% for educational performance in the state; further, graduation rates of cyber charters are consistently and substantially below state average; and

WHEREAS, the current funding formula for cyber charter schools is based on school district expenditures with no relationship to the actual instructional costs for regular and special education instruction and services of the students attending the charter school; and funding of cyber charter schools cost school districts and taxpayers more than \$463 million in 2016-17; and

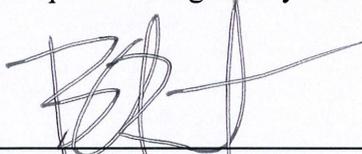
WHEREAS, school districts that operate high-performing cyber programs can do so at significantly reduced costs as compared to paying tuition to a cyber charter school, enabling them to retain critical funding in the district for the benefit of all students. As evidence, the Brandywine Heights Area School District has a very successful program established in 2009. In the 2018-19 school year, 225 students are participating in over 200 online course offerings through the Brandywine Heights Virtual Academy with a 92% success rate and an average grade of 87%. Brandywine Heights Virtual Academy's online program has met the needs and interests of over 1,000 students in the last ten years by providing flexible schedule options for enrichment, remediation, career readiness, credit-recovery, and homebound instruction. A district-run program provides local support for our students and holds them accountable for academic achievement and attendance which cannot be replicated by cyber charter schools; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 34 and House Bill 526 supports school districts that provide their own cyber education programs by removing the financial responsibility for resident students who enroll in cyber charter schools instead of the districts' programs;

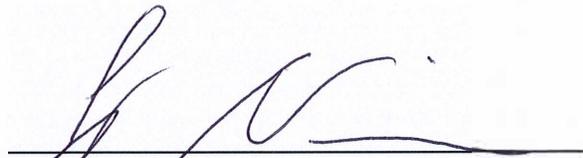
NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Brandywine Heights Area School Board supports Senate Bill 34 and House Bill 526 or other efforts to provide a fiscally commonsense approach that will provide savings for school districts operating full-time, online learning programs and are required to make tuition payments for their students to attend cyber charter schools.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be submitted to the elected senators and representatives of the Brandywine Heights Area School District in the General Assembly, and to the Governor of Pennsylvania.

Adopted this eighth day of May 2019.



Bryan Rothermel, School Board President
Brandywine Heights Area School District



Craig Neiman, School Board Secretary