

Resolution Against Lifting the Cap on Commonwealth Charter Schools

WHEREAS, free public schools available to all students regardless of income, ability, need or English language proficiency are foundational to our democracy; and

WHEREAS, all of our students deserve high-quality public schools that teach the whole child, providing enrichment and addressing social and emotional needs in addition to core academic subjects; and

WHEREAS, local accountability for our public schools is necessary to ensure that schools are responsive to the needs of their communities; and

WHEREAS, Ashland is losing \$839,577 to Commonwealth charter schools and public school districts across the state are losing more than \$408 million this year alone — a loss of funds in part due to a declining reimbursement, that is undermining the ability of districts to provide all students with the educational services to which they are entitled; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth's reimbursement to districts has failed to be fully funded, seeing funding of 63% in FY'14; 55% in FY'15; and 69% in FY'16; and

WHEREAS, Governor Baker's proposed reform of charter reimbursement neither fully funds reimbursement nor equitably treats sending districts; and

WHEREAS, Commonwealth charter schools are often approved over the objections of a majority of community residents and their elected officials and are not accountable to local elected officials once they are approved; and

WHEREAS, Commonwealth charter schools often fail to serve the same proportion of special needs students, low-income students and English language learners as the districts from which they receive students and often use high suspension rates to drive out students they don't want to serve; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth charter school system is creating separate and unequal opportunities for success; and

WHEREAS, lifting the cap on charter schools would greatly worsen the problems listed above and lead to a costly and divisive two-track school system;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Ashland School Committee opposes lifting the cap on Commonwealth charter schools.

For the Ashland School Committee

Laurie Tosti, Chair
Ashland School Committee