



THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GLOUCESTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Jonathan Pope, Chairperson

Kathleen A. Clancy, Vice-Chairperson

Sefatia Romeo Theken, Mayor of Gloucester
Joel Favazza
Anthony Gross
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October 3, 2016

The Honorable Bruce Tarr
State Senator
State House—Room 308
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Ann-Margaret Ferrante
State Representative
State House—Room 473F
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Tarr & Representative Ferrante:

RE: Resolution Against Lifting the Cap on Commonwealth Charter Schools

Please find attached the Gloucester School Committee's "Resolution Against Lifting the Cap on Commonwealth Charter Schools" as voted and approved at our meeting on September 28, 2016.

On behalf of the School Committee, thank you for attending our meeting on August 10, 2016, to answer questions regarding "Question 2."

As always, thanks for all you do for our community.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Pope
Chairperson



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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, there is inadequate oversight of existing charter schools to the detriment of communities and students; and

WHEREAS, the Foundation Review Commission concluded that Chapter 70 Aid is grossly underfunded by as high as \$2.1 billion¹; and

WHEREAS, the amount of Chapter 70 aid withheld for each student leaving to attend a charter school exceeds by a large factor the amount per pupil aid that the district receives from the state; and

¹According to the Foundation Review Commission's report, recent studies have estimated the gap between foundation and actual spending in these categories to be as high as \$2.1 billion combined (*Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, "Cutting Class: Underfunding the Foundation Budget's Core Education Program", 2011; Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education, "School Funding Reality: A Bargain Not Kept", 2010; Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, "Report on the Status of Public Education Financing System in Massachusetts", 2013*).

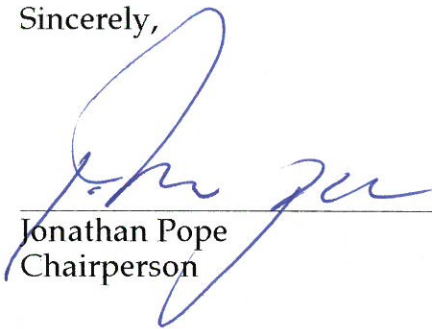
WHEREAS, the loss of monies to a district results in either reducing programs in the local public school or raising local taxes, thus shifting additional costs onto local taxpayers without their approval; and

WHEREAS, transparent accountability to Commonwealth taxpayers would be improved with a funding mechanism to fund charter school directly out of a line item in the state budget; and

WHEREAS, lifting the cap on charter schools would greatly worsen the financial and accountability problems listed about and lead to a costly, parallel and divisive two-track school system and which runs counter to the state push for regionalization; and

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

Sincerely,



Jonathan Pope
Chairperson

9/29/16
Date