

## Michigan Charter Schools--Talking Points

- Charter school competition has not spurred innovation in public school educational practices, nor has there been any meaningful improvement in average statewide educational results. While other states move ahead, Michigan remains in the bottom third of national rankings, and it is headed south. In 2017, the average fourth-grade reading score was below its 2011 score and in fourth-grade math, the average score was the lowest since 2003.
- Pro-charter advocates point to Michigan as the way *not* to do things. Why? In 2011, Governor Snyder and the Republican-majority legislature eliminated any cap on the number of charters. Michigan had more charter school authorizers than any other state. Also less oversight or accountability, and massive student and staff turnover rates.
- In 2015, a broad coalition proposed legislation for more funding, more accountability, and better authorization practices. They suggested creating a commission to coordinate placement of new schools. The DeVos family and their supporters successfully opposed all these reforms, particularly the recommendation for regulating school locations.
- During the past 24-year period, as the student population dropped by 11 percent, Michigan added 300 charter schools (a 50 percent increase in the total number of schools) without any oversight regarding their location. Urban areas were inundated, while other areas added very few.
- Here's what happens in the inundated areas: as the number of charter schools in an area passes 20 percent, public schools are slowly crippled. They lose the per-capita student payments from the state. A vicious cycle ensues. As public school revenues plummet; they must cut salaries and programs, potentially worsening the loss of students and revenue.
- This means schools compete for students, distracting administrators away the task of educating children. Charter schools lure prospective students with cash, laptops and bicycles.
- When knocking public schools by cherry-picking some of their occasionally lower scores, charter advocates fail to mention that public schools enroll significantly higher numbers of special education students, particularly those with the most serious conditions (requiring the costliest support services).
- Annually, charter schools collect nearly \$1 billion dollars in state funds. Charter authorizers take three percent. For-profit management companies (used by a majority of charters) take an unknown amount of profits. With profits on the line, educational goals take second place.
- For-profit management companies have no financial accountability or public oversight. Several make enormous donations to state legislators to influence education regulations.
- DeVos and DeVos-supported Republicans want to expand charter schools across the state and country—an important reason to understand the detrimental effects of their charter school experiment on Michigan's urban school districts.