

# FACT SHEET

— From the Department of Government Relations —

## HB 3257 (Wheeler) / HB 3780 (D. Burke)

### IEA Position – OPPOSE

At a time of a ballooning state deficit, an ongoing budget impasse and no identified new source of K-12 education revenue, our local school across the state are suffering. At the same time, a state and national effort is underway to expand the number of charter schools and increase their funding mechanism.

The General Assembly is trying to figure out a way to get more resources to our local schools and to students of Illinois, an effort that is challenging and difficult. And while charter schools may have a place in the education system, the increase of schools and additional resources is premature and not responsible.

**Oppose Rapid Expansion – HB 3257** would look to remove all “caps” on the number of charter schools allowed to operate in Illinois. The reason for these caps is to avoid what has happened in other states where unlimited numbers of charters were opened resulting in very little to no accountability and oversight. Even with the current caps there is still room for 57 new charter schools.

Chicago is capped at 75 charter schools (five of those charters being strictly for dropouts and at-risk students). There are currently 49 active charter schools in Chicago. The rest of Illinois is “capped” at 45. There are currently 14 active charter schools outside of Chicago.

Location	Active	Cap
Chicago	49	75
Downstate	14	45

When looking at the number of existing charter schools against the number of available charters it becomes obvious that the only reason to remove the caps would be in anticipation of rapid charter growth. In fact, Illinois Network of Charter Schools is proposing 48 new charter schools over the course of the next three years. This would signal an unprecedented change for charter school authorizing in Illinois. This is problematic, primarily, because of the way charter schools are funded.

**Oppose Charter Funding – HB 3780** would eliminate the current funding mechanism of 75% to 125% per capita tuition cost (PCTC) range for charter schools to 97% to 103%. This is problematic because it takes away a school district’s flexibility to decide the best way to fund the education for all of their students, not just the students attending a charter school.

HB 3780 becomes more troubling when considered in conjunction with HB 3257. Charter expansion has not occurred in Illinois with the sort of rapid growth charter advocates would prefer. The State Charter School Commission (SCSC) is the only path for such growth. If the majority of new charter schools are established by the SCSC the General Assembly will have created an environment of zero accountability for those schools because:

- Charter schools will be placed in districts without local support or approval.
- Charter schools will receive 100% PCTC despite financial conditions in the parent district.
- Without a cap in place, charters can expand without standards and financial oversight.

Both of these bill are problematic when considered individually and even more troubling when you consider the impact the passage both would have on every student and classroom in Illinois.