

AB1316 Would Be Devastating to North County for Students, Jobs, and the Economy

Public charter schools across North San Diego have enjoyed a long-standing reputation for being great places for students to think, communicate, and achieve. Families in this region have enjoyed the benefit of choice in public education since 1994, when the first public charter school was opened in Vista. Over the past three decades, the number of charter schools has increased, and the quality of those programs continue to draw in students annually wanting a great public education. Each of these schools raise the bar for student achievement and help improve the landscape of public education and help traditional districts meet the needs of students in the region.

Assembly member, Patrick O'Donnell (D) of Long Beach, has authored legislation that seeks to end charter public schools in California under the guise of accountability. Yes, there has been waste, fraud, and abuse in charter public schools that was the genesis of his bill, AB1316. Unfortunately, the facts lead to the conclusion that these schools were not being scrutinized by the districts overseeing them. These districts were taking millions from the charter schools in oversight fees and were failing to provide these schools with oversight. That would have included pulling student records, reviewing financial data, visiting school sites, hosting face-to-face conversations with charter school leaders, etc. None of that was done and district administrators merely turned a blind eye to these schools which created a nightmare for the California taxpayers.

Does AB1316 provide any accountability for school districts and those charged with charter school oversight? No, Mr. O'Donnell does not include those vital elements in the legislation that is truly needed if we want this to stop in California. The school districts that took the oversight fees have been asked by the courts to return that money that was given to them to look the other way while suspending their oversight and accountability efforts. If the bill is truly about accountability, why are the districts at the center of these criminal acts excluded?

When you consider the top charter public schools in the region, if AB1316 was to pass tomorrow, there are seven charter school organizations that would be directly impacted, and most of their thirty-six locations would be closed over the next few years as a result of this legislation. Looking at just these schools, who they employ, and the number of facility locations they have combined, this would be a devastating loss to the region of North San Diego County.

- 13,910 students displaced from their educational program
- 1,381 school employees now unemployed
- 36 open commercial and educational spaces left vacant
- \$135,400,000 in lost potential as these charter public schools close

Let us all remember, parents and guardians left traditional public education for a reason. They sought out charter public schools to meet the individual needs of their son or daughter that were not being met in traditional public education. Parents will not likely place their children back into traditional schools when charter public schools are closed. Mr. O'Donnell is misinformed in his thinking about charter public schools and is misguided in the creation of AB1316. All charter

schools need and desire accountability. If this legislation was about that one element, all charter school leaders would all be lining up to support its passage.

One of the only organizations showing support for AB1316, the San Diego County District Attorney's Office, recently rescinded that support when they read the bill language. Even they know a political hit job when they see one against students, parents, and public education. In their updated correspondence to Patrick O'Donnell, they shared the following statement. *"We want to be very clear – our office supports legally run charter schools and we want parents to have school choice. Charter schools can be great options for parents and students."*

For more information on AB1316, and how you can help defeat it, please visit StopAB1316.com