

Talking Points

AB 276 (Medina) – Accountability and Transparency at Charter Schools

Bill Summary:

AB 276 expressly states that charter schools and the entities managing charter schools are subject to the Brown Act (open meetings), Public Records Act (open books), and two laws preventing conflicts of interest: the Political Reform Act and Government Code 1090.

AB 276 clarifies that an employee of a charter school is not disqualified from serving as a member of the governing body of the charter school because of that employment status; such a member of the governing body of a charter school must abstain from voting on or influencing or attempting to influence another member of that body regarding any matter uniquely affecting his or her own employment.

Talking Points:

- AB 276 requires charter school governing boards to comply with laws promoting transparency and accountability to parents and the public in the operation of public schools and expenditure of public funds; it does not ask more from charter schools than of traditional public schools.
- More than \$149 million of waste, fraud, and abuse of tax dollars has been documented in California's charter school environment that has ultimately hurt our students and communities. Having private and secret meetings to discuss how tax dollars will be spent is not acceptable. Too much is at risk when our students are counting on sound financial decisions that will ensure they get the quality public education they need and deserve.
- AB 276 prohibits charter school board members and their immediate families from financially benefiting from their schools. Public schools' conflict of interest laws and disclosure regulations should apply to charter schools that receive public funds.
- It's never been the intent to yield all control while granting total authority to charter schools to have their way with taxpayer dollars without any accountability. We need to ensure complete transparency in our schools and that means we must require companies and organizations that manage charter schools to release to parents and the public how they spend taxpayer money, including their annual budgets and contracts.
- The public's business should be transacted in public. Public agencies must take their actions openly and their deliberations must be conducted openly. Families deserve to know how their schools are being run, and our state deserves an education system that is free from unfair advantages and double standards. Companies and organizations that manage charter schools must open board meetings to parents and the public, similarly to public school board meetings.