



## Virtual Charter School Legislation Talking Points February 22, 2008

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The Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) supports LRB 4137/1, which would maintain local control of online courses and allow virtual charter schools to continue in Wisconsin while establishing reasonable state standards for their operation.

Sen. John Lehman, Rep. Brett Davis and Sen. Luther Olsen are to be commended for reaching a bipartisan agreement on legislation to ensure the continuation of virtual charter schools in Wisconsin with state standards. Unfortunately, that agreement was modified in the Senate to effectively prohibit any new virtual charter schools in Wisconsin and cap enrollment to the existing schools until 2015-16.

School board members support the continued expansion of technology in education and are moving to provide increased opportunities for students to access online courses and curriculum.

Legislators should reject efforts to prevent school districts from creating new, innovative programs and to cap enrollment to existing public school programs. Rather, legislators should work with school boards to embrace the expanding opportunities presented by technology and support their efforts to ensure that the educational needs of all students are being met.

School boards continue to face revenue shortfalls and declining enrollments. They are challenged on a daily basis to prepare their students for a global economy. Stymieing innovation in public schools will not solve the funding dilemma or contribute to improved student achievement.

LRB 4137/1 would:

- Define virtual charter schools
- Clarify that the current restriction on school boards locating a school outside its district does not apply to virtual charter schools
- Clarify that a student may attend a virtual charter school by open enrollment
- Clarify that any person, other than instruction staff, do not need to be certified
- Allow DPI to create a statewide web academy
- Ensure that virtual charter school teachers are available, respond to student inquiries in a timely manner and provide at least 150 days of educational services each school year
- Require virtual charter school teachers to be appropriately licensed
- Require a parent advisory council for each virtual charter school
- Require contact information to be provided to parents
- Require virtual charter school students to respond appropriately to staff
- Prohibit independent charter schools from creating virtual charter schools
- Allow districts to charge tuition to out-of-state students for virtual charter schools
- Require professional development for all staff teaching online courses
- Require virtual charter school contracts to be made public
- Require an audit of virtual charter schools