

Cutting Funding From Pa Public Cyber Schools Will Only Hurt Families Like Mine

By Robyn Scolnick

PA. - My son, Ryan, is graduating this year from Achievement House Cyber Charter School, a public cyber charter school in Pennsylvania. His school literally saved his life. Truthfully, we would've never explored this option if his public school in Philadelphia didn't fail him so miserably.

It's important for me to share his story at a time when Gov. Josh Shapiro, public education special interests and some lawmakers are seeking to cut the funding for public cyber charter schools while proposing billions of dollars in new spending for schools like the one that failed my son.

When the governor gave his budget address, it broke my heart, and the hearts of thousands of parents like me, when he called for cutting funding for our schools. Why should my child and others like him have funding cut from their schools when the Philadelphia public school my son had attended failed him for years?

At an early age, my son suffered developmental delays and was later diagnosed with ADHD and high-functioning Autism Spectrum Disorder, or ASD. Classroom instructions were always too fast for him. Too much was going on, and classroom noise made it difficult for him to process instructions from his teacher. Things only became more difficult. Ryan never had friends, and teachers treated him like he was a problem and wouldn't follow his 504 service plan. This would lead him to be diagnosed with depression and anxiety. He would then suffer PTSD from being bullied and assaulted by his fellow students.

Then COVID-19 happened, and all schooling went virtual. Most kids had a hard time adjusting to this new way of learning, but Ryan thrived. Without distractions, he focused on classwork and felt safe in an environment away from bullies. He finished his freshman year of high school with honors.



When students returned to their classrooms, my son lasted only three days before his depression, anxiety and PTSD returned. He refused to get out of bed. That's when we turned to a public cyber charter school and found Achievement House Cyber Charter School, and it helped restore his love for school.

After enrolling at Achievement House, a free public school open to all Pennsylvania students, he developed a tremendous sense of self confidence. His grades were excellent, and he actively participated in class. He even became a student ambassador this year, welcoming new students and helping them adjust. This month, he's graduating at the top of his class and is one of the school's Class of 2024 scholarship winners.

In the fall, he will begin classes at a community college with dreams of working in the film industry as a director. While in school, he made this documentary on the history and evolution of film: <https://youtu.be/5Kd6VSa9HaM?si=A27RGITHlapYJ47S>. His success at a public cyber charter school is proof that a child doesn't have to sit in an overcrowded classroom to receive an education and create amazing things.

It's my hope Gov. Shapiro and legislators understand that none of this happens without Achievement House and having this choice available to Pennsylvania families. Cutting funding for our schools doesn't come without a cost to the quality of the education they provide. So many parents like me find it heartbreaking to see this. Our children are just as important.

It always seems so strange when people work against giving parents freedom to choose a school setting that fits their child the best. Somehow, school districts are allowed to raise taxes and accumulate billions of dollars in savings while not being held accountable for how they educate our children.

Cutting the funds of Pennsylvania cyber charters won't help anyone. They already receive less than the other public schools. If anything, more cuts will only hurt families like mine, who depend on the wonderful lifeline public cybers provide. I believe that every parent has the right to choose how their child is educated because we're all individuals and we all learn differently.

There are kids out there like my son who don't fit into a traditional school setting. All they need is a chance. I'll never understand why Gov. Shapiro and some legislators want to take that away from them.

Robyn Scolnick is a member of Pennsylvania Parents for School Options. She lives in Northeast Philadelphia and is the proud parent of a son who graduated from Achievement House Cyber Charter School.



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Jacobsburg Historical Society Presents:
Salute to All Veterans and World War II, Living History Weekend.

June 29 - 30, 2024 10am - 4pm | Admission: \$10.00

JHS members with card, Current Duty Military, Veterans, Scouts in uniform, & Children under 12 are free.

“A Time for Healing”.
A special remembrance/honor program is scheduled for 1:00 pm Saturday.

The “Legacy Exhibit”, a Traveling Holocaust Educational Exhibit will be on display in our Visitor Center. It is comprised of a display that includes museum quality artifacts, reproductions and original photographs.

Tour various Military Camps and talk with the participants. Examine the display of period military vehicles. Weapons demonstrations will be presented throughout the weekend.

Nazareth Area Community Band to perform a tribute to our Military. American Legion Color Guard Rifle Team will present the colors.

WWII Vendors and the Happy Tummy Food Truck will be onsite.

Tour the 1832 John Joseph Henry Home, Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum and Gift Shop, Carriage Barn, and Boat shed.

Hearth cooking demonstration in the Summer Kitchen, and operating Blacksmith Shop.

Boulton Historic Site & Jacobsburg Historical Society is Located at 402 Henry Road, Nazareth, PA.
Just off the Belfast Exit of Route 33 | www.jacobsburghistory.com

This program is being funded in whole or in part with funding from the Hotel Tax Grant Program through the County of Northampton Department of Community & Economic Development



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