



**The School District
of Greenville County**
Board of Trustees

January 2, 2012

The Honorable Michael L. Fair
South Carolina State Senate
Post Office Box 14632
Greenville, South Carolina 29601

Dear Senator Fair:

As the Board of Trustees of Greenville County Schools, we would like to express our concerns once again regarding House Bill 6241 which amends the current Charter School Act and is presently on the Senate calendar. If passed as currently drafted, this legislation will negatively impact our students in several ways. We implore you to consider amending this bill to address the obvious inequities. If it is not amended, we ask that you oppose its passage at this time.

The proposed legislation would allow charter school students to participate in extracurricular activities at their home-based school even though the home-based school receives no funding for the student. Without a doubt, this diminishes funding available to the non-charter school students attending that school. It also limits opportunities for students at the home school since they can be bumped by a charter school student for limited positions.

Participating in school sponsored athletic programs and extra-curricular activities is not like playing in a recreation league. It is an extension of the school's program, building school spirit and strengthening the school community. We believe that the legislature would better serve parents and students in both charter and traditional schools by encouraging charter schools to create their own programs where interest exists. Unfortunately, this legislation unfairly penalizes students attending traditional schools in favor of those attending charters.

Further, as currently drafted, this legislation allows The State Charter School District to retain 2% of state and local appropriations from sponsored charter schools to cover the costs for overseeing its charter schools but prohibits local districts from retaining the same funds. There is no doubt that oversight of charter schools costs money. From the time a charter application is submitted and throughout the charter school's existence, staff must be involved with oversight and assistance. This is of particular importance in the area of special education, for which the district has significant liability. The local district has the exact same responsibilities as the State Charter School District. Both entities should be treated equally.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislative request. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call upon me.

Sincerely,

Roger D. Meek
Chairman