

## Cyber Charter School Enrollment Change and Fiscal Impact to Districts: RFA Methodology

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RFA's analysis was prepared by Jian Gao, Research Associate; Stephanie Levin, Associate Director; and Adam Schott, Senior Policy Analyst. The analysis builds on the following sources, provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). Some files were posted to the agency's website; others were obtained by direct requests of agency staff.

Table 1. Data sources by year

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Statewide Enrollment	■	■	■	
Enrollment by LEA	■	■	■	■
Cyber charter enrollment, by district	■	■	■	■
Charter expenditure, by ADM, by district	■	■	■	■

RFA added the total district-level enrollment reported by the PDE to the charter school enrollment as determined by the number of students for which the LEA makes charter schools payments; this allowed us to obtain an estimate of the total public school and charter school enrollment for each school district statewide. Analysis was limited to those school years for which complete data were available: the 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12, and 2012-13 school years.

Changes in enrollment for both regular schools and cyber charter schools is based on the annual October 1<sup>st</sup> head count as reported by LEAs; because this report reflects a single point in time, it may understate change in enrollment as students can make multiple transfers between the district and cyber charter schools during the school year.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For statewide analysis, only three years of statewide enrollments were available on the PDE website; we therefore used the sum of the LEAs, based on a preliminary tally from PDE, as an estimation as the total statewide enrollment for 2013. (Enrollment for Occupational CTCs and IUs were not included in our analysis.) Therefore, the final numbers in this report may be different from the final total statewide enrollment for 2013.

The total expenditure for students enrolled in cyber charter schools is based on the enrollment, multiplied by the per ADM expenditure for charter schools. RFA did not attempt to incorporate an annual cost of living index, which may further understate fiscal impacts.

For both points of analysis—enrollment change and expenditure—RFA delineated between total counts/cost and figures for special needs populations.