



January 28, 2026

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,

I am the head of school at Seacoast Charter School in Dover NH. We are an art integrated chartered public school in Dover NH serving 288 students in grades K-8. I am writing to respectfully share my firm opposition to HB1623 regarding uniform rates and services for special education.

The two main reasons for my position are, first, that charter schools are inherently very different and offer different programming. Those differences lead to different costs. Second, there are disparate rates of pay and building costs across the state. With a uniform rate, charter schools will be unable to compete for high quality educators.

Because we have almost 300 students, we are able to employ certified special educators who provide services to students with IEPs. They are an integral part of their grade level teams and the school. Home districts contract for related services like speech, occupational therapy and physical therapy and those services take place at our school. Our building and programming allow for this seamless approach to special education. But not all charter schools have that capacity. It might be more expensive to find contracted service providers willing to travel to a charter school, or it might be more expensive to run a program like ours that includes space costs and benefits. While I don't know the specific costs associated with different approaches, I do know that the law should allow for the uniqueness of charter schools. Imposing uniform rates and services for special education limits what charter schools can offer to students.

Charter schools need to be able to offer competitive compensation packages to their employees. Uniform rates could restrict a charter school's ability to attract and retain quality educators. The average salary in our surrounding towns is already up to \$19,000 more than ours. Just today, we had a valuable member of our teaching staff leave because they took a job paying significantly more than we are able to pay. We need to be able to stay competitive; uniform rates would make that far more challenging than it already is.

Thank you all for what you do for the state and especially for the children of New Hampshire. Please vote no on this bill and allow charter schools to continue to charge what it costs to maintain a quality special education program. I appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nicole Outsen  
Head of School  
Seacoast Charter School

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