

The Intelligencer

Opinion

LTE: Cyber charter school 'rant' off base

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Quakertown Superintendent Dr. Bill Harner's recent rant against cyber charter schools is misleading and shows incredible disdain for Pennsylvania parents. Dr. Harner says he wants to create a "future ready workforce."

In the digital age, cyber schools are uniquely situated to do just that! Their flexibility allows students to pursue opportunities that aren't limited by zip codes or school calendars. As Dr. Harner knows, money only goes to cyber schools if parents choose to enroll their children there — which only happens if the local district isn't meeting their needs.

No district can meet the needs of every student within its borders. That's why even at the "best" districts some families choose another option. For many students, cyber schools are the only option within reach. They offer a variety of curriculum and are accessible wherever there's an internet connection. This enables them to serve a diverse population — rural, urban, bullying victims, students with special needs, gifted students, kids who need a flexible schedule like athletes and dancers, etc.

Disregarding the benefits of choice, Dr. Harner advocates forcing families to choose a district-run cyber school or pay separate tuition. This attitude implies that children — and the funding meant to educate them — are the property of the district. It also eliminates alternatives for some low-income families.

If the goal is to create a future ready workforce, we need more school choice — not less. Cyber schools are an important part of that equation.

Colleen Hroncich, senior fellow

Commonwealth Foundation, Harrisburg