

## **Glass - Charter School Bill Could Forever Change the Landscape of Education in Michigan – Art Aisner - Patch**

Bill to lift cap on charter schools passes, awaits Gov. Snyder's signature.

Though Gov. Rick Snyder's signature is still pending, officials with the Bloomfield Hills Schools were certain Thursday that the measures to lift the cap on charter schools and cyber schools operating in Michigan will become law.

What's uncertain, and somewhat uncomfortable to think about, is how big of a shift this could be for Michigan's public education system, Superintendent Rob Glass said.

"We might see a fundamental shift that takes us where we may never see where we are today again," he said at a well-attended school board meeting Thursday night at the Doyle Center. "We have to think about how we're going to compete in this new landscape."

That landscape changed Wednesday night when the Michigan House voted 58-49 to pass Senate Bill 618. The measure passed the State Senate earlier this year on a party-line vote but changes to the final language in the differing bills had to be made and were approved late Thursday, the [Detroit News reported](#). Snyder is expected to sign the bill and make the changes effective by the end of March.

Michigan currently has 255 charter schools and many residents are relegated to waiting lists due to demand in some areas. More can be established if they are sponsored by a major university and meet certain geographical criteria, the News reported.

Republicans believe opening more charters will provide more options for families and improve education.

"Michigan's children should not have to wait for adults in government to remove limits on their future," said State Rep. Tom McMillin, R-Rochester Hills, chair of the House Education Committee. "By phasing out this arbitrary, outdated cap today, thousands of students currently on charter school waiting lists were given real hope for a better tomorrow."

House Republicans failed to muster enough votes to grant the charter legislation immediate effect, so it wouldn't become law until 90 days after the last day of the session, scheduled for Dec. 25.

Democrats and public school proponents argued that charters aren't subject to the same standards of transparency and accountability as traditional public schools, and they object to for-profit companies administering education.

The changes will also dilute the funding available to districts and force them to jockey with new competitors for those dollars, Glass argued.

"We'll now have to enter these markets, not because it's where what we want to do, but just to retain the resources we have," he said. "As hard as we all fought this because of no restrictions on quality, and as much as we opposed it, it seemed like this was going to happen from the start"

Board President Ingrid Day help up printouts of the bills and changes for parents to look at Thursday night and urged them to get involved.

"There are a lot of changes around the corner and you need stay informed and involved. We could use your help with that," she said.