

Charter schools: The Roy Report (19)

The Bethlehem Gadfly Charter Schools, Education, Serious Issues April 4, 2019

Take the “Connecting Bethlehem” survey
(19th in a series on Education and Charter Schools)

Gadfly promised a report on his March 28 meeting on the charter school issue with BASD Superintendent Dr. Joseph Roy and hastens to get to it this morning before his notes go stone cold.

It was a great meeting. Dr. Roy is a warm individual and especially “warm” over the issue of charter schools. He was extremely gracious and overflowed with information.

Not wanting to eat up too much of a busy man’s time, Gadfly told Dr. Roy that the focus of his visit was narrowly on why our students are going to charter schools, but Dr. Roy thought it important to start at the beginning — with the privatization movement itself.

More on this basic and wider issue in subsequent posts, but, as promised, let’s focus here on that question of why our local students are going to charter schools.

BASD doesn’t have surveys, but here are some of the reasons, in no particular order, that Dr. Roy has gathered from interactions with parents of charter school students.

A range of local reasons from the very practical to the highly academic.

- full-day kindergarten: not an issue now because BASD offers it, but this was attractive to some parents because of work situations
- transportation: BASD does not bus everybody but is required to do so for charter schools

- uniforms: conventional in some cultures
- cachet (good SAT word): a private school education without the cost
- bullying: need for a change of scene
- the academic program: such as LVA's IB curriculum

Gadfly will reach out to Lehigh Valley Academy in particular, the school that enrolls the most BASD students, to see what they can tell us about why parents are choosing charter schools.

But Gadfly would like to hear from charter school families themselves. Gadfly doesn't know any. Is there no one among Gadfly followers with charter school experience that could help fill in the picture for us with personal motivations?

And look soon for more on the general charter school movement from my conversation with Dr. Roy.

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