

the floor of the rotunda, in full view of cameras and witnesses, and still get re-elected. That doesn't hold true for the rest of us," she said.

Edgar, though, said Friday that he was tired of legislators preoccupied with parochial concerns about how they would be perceived by voters in their individual districts.

"I think there's too much of that cheap, 'What's the political thing to do here?' The right thing to do is the best political thing to do in the long run," he said.

The governor is considering several options as to his own future, including a campaign for the U.S. Senate, a re-election run or retirement, presumably to a corporate-style post at one of the state universities.

"He'll help in 1998? What if he's not running for re-election?" asked one party leader. "Then what?"

Edgar's plan, to offer some property-tax relief in exchange for the

income-tax increase to aid schools, seemed doomed almost from the start. While the governor sought to build consensus with statewide referendums on the matter, Philip and Daniels balked, saying they understood the mood of the electorate and were ready to address the nagging school-funding debate.

The plan threatened suburbanites with higher taxes and no guarantees that their property taxes would remain stable. And it did not have the backing of business leaders who usually give cover to Republican moderates.

Business leaders wanted Edgar to sell the tax by offering strict classroom reforms on the Chicago model, giving principals and local school boards greater powers over teacher unions.

But Edgar opted instead to align himself with the Illinois Education Association, the statewide teachers union that has supported him in every election except 1994.

That was the campaign that will be remembered for how Edgar pounded on Democratic challenger Dawn Clark Netsch for authoring the same kind of income-tax increase with property-tax relief he supported this year.

Also hurting Edgar's tax plan was his inability to manufacture the kind of deals that made former Gov. James Thompson a legend among Republicans and Democrats alike.

Riverboat casinos, deregulation of electric utilities, school reform and a domed stadium plan could have been packaged by the governor to sell his tax increase.

"You always wonder what if," said Edgar spokesman Thomas Hardy. "But the governor has worked very hard on behalf of this legislation since last year and certainly all spring. And he believes he's made a sincere and concerted effort to pass this long-overdue reform legislation." ■

50. The New York Times

06/01/97; Edition: Late Edition - Final; Section: Section 13CN; Connecticut Weekly Desk; Page 17, Column 1 Category: Commentary

A New Kind of School for Connecticut

By FRANCES CHAMBERLAIN

ONE THOUSAND Connecticut schoolchildren are signing up to attend very different schools in September. They might join a farm in the city, a sports academy, a school mixing urban and rural students, or one focusing on outdoor education.

The 12 new schools are the result of state legislation passed in 1996 allowing the formation of charter schools — public schools with limited enrollments paid for by taxpayers but run by parents — already offered in nearly two dozen other states.

Although Connecticut has alternative schools and magnet schools, the 12 charter schools approved by the State Board of Education earlier this spring will be this state's first.

"The Connecticut legislation places a strong emphasis on academic performance," explained Yvette Melendez Thiesfield, charter schools program manager for the State Board of Education. "Education can be delivered in creative, innovative ways that may look like basic education, but the method of delivery might be unique."

When the board announced that it would begin reviewing proposals for

charter schools, 29 applicants completed the arduous process.

"There are 13 points in the legislation that charter schools must address," Ms. Thiesfield explained. "This covers everything from how well articulated their mission is, to instructional programs and governing structures."

Of the 12 applications approved, two are for local charters, meaning that the local school boards retain authority and the other 10 are for state charters. All are for five-year periods, with annual reviews set.

"Charter schools are responsible for all policies, implementation and hiring. The school acts like a local board of education and is overseen directly by the State Board of Education," Ms. Thiesfield said. "Magnet schools are less heterogenous, and may have five districts coming together with a lot of involvement by local boards. Magnet schools are designed to address racial isolation, while charter schools don't make this an objective."

One of the new charters, Explorations, will be based in Winsted and will incorporate 12 towns, including Region 1, Region 7 and Gilbert and Hartland Schools. Mary Ann Buchanan, currently

the director of Housatonic's Alternative School in Region 1, created the concept for Explorations.

According to a synopsis handed out to the communities, Explorations will involve students in a school-to-career program, adventure education, magazine production and an after-school program called "Life-long Leisure."

"The kid who wants to try hands-on education, and get out of the classroom, can benefit from this," Mrs. Buchanan said. "We have to meet all the state-mandated requirements, academically," she said. "However, we will also have a partnership with the local cable company to learn video technology. English class will include magazine production. The Winsted Retail Association will provide mentoring relationships. Winsted Senior Center volunteers will be giving time after school to teach kids new skills like Italian cooking, golf and computers."

The program is modeled on Housatonic's Alternative School, which has been in operation for the past 18 years. Mrs. Buchanan has been with them for the past eight.

She talks happily about the success of some of her graduates. "One student,"

she recalled, "was a high school dropout who was living independently since he was 14. He was a hard worker and self motivated, but we were the door that got him through school. After he graduated he did survival training with the Wilderness Education Association National Standard program. He was the youngest student ever to be accepted into the instructor program."

Sonja Blass, a lead photographer for a Connecticut daily newspaper, learned her skills at the Alternative School. "She's really loving her career," Mrs. Buchanan said. "That's a success, if you teach a kid a career they love."

Explorations' motto is "achieve through self discipline," and the logo includes a thinker and rock climber. Students will spend four days each week on academics, and alternate the fifth day between career studies and outdoor adventure courses.

Each school receives a \$6,000 per pupil allotment from the state. In addition, Connecticut received a \$1 million Federal grant for start-up funds. "Ninety five percent of this money will go directly to the 12 charters," Mrs. Thiesfield said. Local boards won't be able to count the students at state charters in their enrollment.

"Each district is different in its response," Ms. Thiesfield said. "Some had more concern about enrollment than others. If charter schools in Connecticut become as popular as they are in other states, local school districts might be concerned about finances. However, those who are involved in legislation see this as a real opportunity, something that can enhance local school districts."

In addition to start-up funds, and per pupil expenditures, many of the charter schools will do their own fund raising.

"Ultimately, this activity could determine whether or not they stay in business," Mrs. Thiesfield said.

Ms. Thiesfield also said the numbers were small enough that there shouldn't be much impact on enrollment at the local level.

"We've capped the number at 1,000 students statewide," she said. "In very large districts the number of students leaving to attend a charter school will be so small that it may not impact the total dollar amount at all."

Each group with a charter is busy recruiting students, most having no problem filling the slots. A lottery system may be instituted to make the selections fairly.

"This provides another option for parents and students," Ms. Thiesfield noted. "We are particularly sensitive to the needs of urban school districts, but there is also a lot of interest in the innovation that comes from the creation of charter schools. We want to look at the programs that come out of the developers."

"They could be models for other schools in the future." Learning by Experience

THE 12 charter schools that have been authorized in Connecticut include a wide variety of academic and extracurricular programs. The schools range in size from 44 to 175 students, and cover different age groups. Organizers include groups of parents, teachers, business leaders and others.

The mission of Jumoke Academy in Hartford, covering kindergarten through 6th grade, is to prepare children to compete in the global marketplace. All its children study a foreign language, and parental involvement is important.

Sports Sciences Academy in Hartford, grades 9 through 12, will focus on a school-to-career model in sports communication and fund raising, management, marketing, manufacturing and merchandising, nutrition, pedagogy and law.

Odyssey Community School in Manchester, for bright underachievers in grades 6 through 8, will focus on media literacy to develop analytical thinking and communication skills.

Integrated Day in Norwich, with a

projected enrollment of 175 students, kindergarten through 6, plans an extended schedule. The school's areas of concern include individual research, social curriculum, multi-age grouping, and goal setting and assessment.

Interdistrict School for the Arts and Communication in New London is a middle school that describes itself as taking a holistic approach to academics through the arts and communication skills.

Coventry Science Center, Coventry, a local charter, is a high school program with a science-oriented curriculum.

Village Academy in New Haven, kindergarten through 8th grade, is focused on an instructional program that follows the stages of children, with emphasis on language arts, mathematics, history and science.

Common Ground High School in New Haven will create a farm in the city and utilize extended-day programs and interdisciplinary courses.

The Bridge Academy in Bridgeport, a high school, will provide a college preparatory curriculum. A mentor program, exposure to the world outside Bridgeport, small enrollment and parental involvement are key to the school.

Side by Side Community School in Norwalk, pre-kindergarten through 8th grade, is the only charter that includes the nursery school group. The mission is to create a multiracial environment for urban and suburban children.

Ancestors Community Charter School in Waterbury is a high school for students who have been unable to succeed in a traditional school. Partnerships will provide computer training, cultural programs, health services and internships with businesses and historically black colleges.

Explorations in Winsted, a two-year high school program, will emphasize career exploration, adventure education, video technology, magazine production and culinary arts.

FRANCES

CHAMBERLIN■

didn't rule out including Ayers in graduation ceremonies if he was satisfied with talks with the family. He also said those who support Ayers "don't know all

the facts."

"We know the facts, but we legally can't release them," he said. "There's only one side of the story out there, and our

side will never be out there. It can't be."

Ayers still legally graduates from high school and will get a diploma, even if he isn't allowed to attend ceremonies ■

28. Associated Press

06-12 4:01a

Legislature passes charter school legislation

By PAMELA SAMPSON Associated Press Writer

HARRISBURG (AP) - Gov. Tom Ridge finally has made the grade.

After casting about fruitlessly for two years seeking a way to revamp public education - and to make a name for himself among school reformers - Ridge's charter school proposal is law.

The Legislature has approved a measure to establish Pennsylvania's first nontraditional charter schools, which are publicly funded schools exempt from most regulations that govern public classrooms.

The Senate passed the compromise measure 30-18 on Wednesday; the House followed suit Thursday, voting 137-57.

Ridge, clearly delighted about the most significant education victory of his tenure, expressed confidence that the charter schools will encourage innovation and creativity in public education.

"Charter schools put parents, teachers and community leaders in charge," Ridge said. "And, importantly, whatever they decide, they will be accountable to the community that grants their charter."

Once Ridge signs the measure, Pennsylvania will join at least 25 other states that have experimented with charter schools. But not all lawmakers believe such experiments will succeed.

"Let's not label this as ... some panacea to turn our schools around," said

Rep. Curtis Thomas, D-Philadelphia. "All charter schools are going to do is redirect dollars to an alternative system that might work and might not work."

"Charter schools are not going to save our children," he added.

Another lawmaker agreed that charter schools will not solve all problems, but said they are worth a try.

"They are a start, in that they will begin the process of more local involvement and incentive in doing what is right for the children," said Rep. Dwight Evans, D-Philadelphia.

Under the measure, charter schools could be established by nonprofit groups of parents, teachers, school administrators or others who design the curriculum and have greater freedom in hiring teachers. Up to 25 percent of the teaching staff could be exempt from teacher certification requirements.

Each school would determine qualifications for uncertified personnel, a provision that drew vehement opposition from some lawmakers.

"I can't believe we are considering a plan to allow 25 percent of teachers to be noncertified," said Sen. Richard Kasunic, D-Fayette. "What's next? Are we going to allow 25 percent of our state police officers not to attend the police academy?"

The state would continue to oversee some matters, particularly those involving health, safety, civil rights and

attendance.

Local school boards would have the sole authority to approve or deny applications for charter schools for two years. After that, decisions could be appealed to a seven-member appeals board, whose members would be nominated by the governor and approved by the Senate.

To appeal a decision, a petition must be submitted with signatures of either 2 percent of the voters in a school district or 1,000 district residents, whichever is less.

School districts would get about \$8.5 million over two years to help defray the cost of placing students in charter schools. The provision was designed to address concerns that schools will take a double financial hit - having to pay for a student who moves to a charter school without a decline in the cost of running the student's original school.

Only seven or eight of the 67 groups that received money from the state to set up charter schools are prepared to open in September, said Dan Langan, spokesman for the Education Department. Earlier this year, the state gave 67 groups about \$15,000 each in planning grants.

The state plans to award \$1.4 million in grants next year and is hoping to get as much as \$4 million in federal funds, Langan said. ■

29. Associated Press

06-12 9:11a

California academic named new UMaine president

BANGOR, Maine (AP) - The University of Maine's next president says his primary challenge is to convince more Maine students to attend their home state university.

Peter Hoff of the California State University has been named to the position by the Board of Trustees.

"In large measure it's a matter of getting out there and telling our story," Hoff, 52, said Wednesday. "It's a tremendous place and it's got great programs."

Hoff is currently the senior advisor to the Chancellor of the California State University, a 22-campus system with 350,000 students.

He has also served as a vice chancellor at the University System of Georgia and Indiana University Southeast.

Hoff was chosen from a pool of 41 initial applicants to replace President Frederick Hutchinson, who retires at the end of the month after five years with the university.

History Professor Howard Segal praised Hoff as "a man of rare integrity and great intellect" who isn't a typical administrator.

Segal said that Hoff, who has a doctorate in English and the humanities

from Stanford University and has held several academic appointments as an English professor, "sees himself as much as a faculty member as an administrator - a combination the university needs."

Hoff will be paid \$136,000 a year. He

starts work August 1.

"I'm deeply honored and I consider (the appointment) both a tremendous opportunity and a tremendous challenge," Hoff said. ■

30. Denver Post

06/10/97; Edition: Rockies; Section: Sports; Page D-10

TITLE IX TURNS 25 A struggle from entitlement to empowerment

By Donna Carter Denver Post Sports Writer

The biggest player to influence the world of women's sport is about to turn 25.

That rules out tennis legend Billie Jean King, who struck a blow for women's sports equality with her "Challenge of the Sexes" match against Bobby Riggs 24 years ago and went on to establish the Women's Sports Foundation.

This young heavy hitter is older than 16-year-old tennis sensation Martina Hingis, not as photogenic as Dream Team Olympian and model Lisa Leslie, not as cute as 1984 Olympic gymnastics darling Mary Lou Retton, and certainly not as fast as Olympic sprinter Gail Devers.

But this player helped make all their glory possible.

Title IX celebrates its 25th birthday June 23. Not a catchy nickname, but it's catching the attention of high-school and collegiate administrators, demanding they provide a level playing field for female athletes.

Passed in 1972, Title IX of the Education Amendments to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is a federal law that prohibits gender discrimination in high schools and colleges that receive federal funds.

Since its advent, girls' participation in high-school sports has increased from a ratio of 1 in 27 athletes in 1970 to 1 in 3 today, and college varsity participation has tripled to 110,000 athletes.

The 1990s have been the coming of age of the beneficiaries of Title IX, girls who grew up being affirmed in their love of sport. The result has been unprecedented athletic opportunities.

At the 1996 Olympics, American women won gold in soccer, softball and basketball in front of sellout crowds. The

fallout from the Olympics has been the creation of two professional women's basketball leagues, three new sports magazines for women, signature shoes named after female athletes, new pro softball, volleyball and soccer leagues and unprecedented support from corporate America.

To understand how two funky little Roman numerals could accomplish so much, one need only look at the lives of the beneficiaries, such as University of Colorado basketball coach Ceal Barry, University of Denver women's athletic director Diane Wendt, former CSU women's basketball coach Greg Williams or Colorado State University's 1997 WAC champion softball team.

"The significance of Title IX is that culturally, women athletes and girls are accepted, empowered, esteemed and idolized compared to being ridiculed and criticized in 1972," Barry said.

In 1972, Barry was a high-school senior hoping to play basketball in college. She went to the University of Kentucky, working her way through college in the women's athletic department, which in those days fell under the umbrella of intramurals and recreation.

Things changed with the advent of Title IX.

In 1975, Kentucky's women's athletic budget went from \$3,000 to \$100,000. One woman had been overseeing volleyball, field hockey and basketball. The university began hiring coaches. Barry's junior year, her basketball team stopped playing on the recreation courts and moved to the coliseum and eventually Rupp Arena, where the men played.

Finally, as a senior in 1976, she was one of the school's first recipients of an athletic scholarship as the NCAA took over administration of women's sports

from the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW).

"AIAW scholarships were allowable," Barry said, "but no law said any state or federally funded university needed to support women's teams. Absolutely no scholarships were given out under the AIAW. It governed championships, not the equity and treatment of athletes."

She never received her varsity letter from Kentucky, Barry says wistfully, but Title IX gave her perhaps the legislation's most important legacy - a role model. Barry was set to graduate with an accounting degree. Only a handful of full-time college coaching jobs existed for women, and she couldn't teach and coach because she had no teaching certificate.

"Kentucky hired our first full-time, female basketball coach when I was going into my senior year," Barry said. "It changed the course of my life."

"Suddenly my university creates a position and hires its first full-time women's basketball coach and her degree is in English. A light bulb goes off in my head and I say, 'Oh! I could be a full-time basketball coach, because there is one right here.'"

"It was absolutely huge, career-wise. I would not be in athletics right now if not for Title IX." Title IX has not been a cure-all. Some estimate that more than 80 percent of schools are not in compliance, though many are making progress. Last week, CU and CSU were two of 25 schools named in a complaint the National Women's Law Center filed with the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR), the organization charged with enforcing Title IX.

The complaint alleges the schools discriminate against female athletes by providing fewer scholarships or less money in women's scholarships.

"The effects of Title IX have been

39. Associated Press

06-12 9:13a

Casper teachers look at new high school program

CASPER, Wyo. (AP) - A group of Casper teachers is proposing a new high school teaching program that would require students to use different skills to solve problems.

Five teachers and an administrator said their "problem-based learning center" should be ready for its first 100 students by the fall of 1998.

In the center, students would spend the first half of their day meeting with their teachers and each other to apply lessons they have learned to real

problems, said Elizabeth Horsch, a Casper-Kelly Walsh High School science teacher.

Students would receive math, science, English and social studies credits by working together to solve problems.

For the second half of the day, students would return to their schools for classes on other subjects and extracurricular activities.

Each year, the program would accept 100 sophomores until its numbers stabilize at 300 students, equally divided among sophomores, juniors and seniors,

with 12 teachers.

Horsch said in the coming year, teachers and administrators will design the program specifically to meet the school district's curriculum requirements.

Under the program, students would be presented with a problem they would break down into workable pieces. The students would then determine how to investigate the problem and solve it in a process that would teach them about economics, politics, chemistry, geology, biology, statistics and measurement. ■

40. Philadelphia Inquirer

June 12, 1997

Pa. Senate passes charter school bill

Several attempts were made to block it. A long debate was expected in the House. Supporters predicted the measure would reach Ridge

By Russell E. Eshleman Jr. and Dale Mezzacappa

INQUIRER STAFF WRITERS

HARRISBURG — Gov. Ridge's long-sought charter-school bill cleared its first legislative hurdle last night, and supporters predicted the measure authorizing the major new education revision would reach his desk today.

Following hours of anguish for supporters, who found themselves dealing with a variety of attempts to derail the bill, the Senate passed the charter-school legislation, 30-18.

It then went to the House, where debate commenced at 1:30 this morning.

"Charter schools are not a panacea for all of the real or perceived shortcomings of our education system," said Sen. James J. Rhoades (R., Schuylkill), chairman of the Education Committee. "But charter schools offer us another opportunity. It's time to allow new ideas into public schools."

Charter schools are publicly funded institutions designed to approach education in creative, nontraditional ways free of many of the strict mandates and policies of regular public schools.

Pennsylvania would become the 27th state to pass charter-school legislation. Charters are up and running now in 16

states; by September, according to Joseph Nathan, one of the nation's leading experts on charters, about 500 schools will be operating in 19 states. New Jersey, which passed charter legislation last year, is expected to have some schools operating by fall.

Tim Daniels, a policy analyst in the Pennsylvania Department of Education who has been coordinating Ridge's efforts to get charter schools, said that he expected that six would be ready to open in September and another one in January, if their local school boards approve. The state has already awarded 67 planning grants for charter schools.

The legislation would permit the creation of new schools and the conversion of existing public schools, which would have to win the approval of more than half of the teachers and half of the students at the school, and of the local school board. Sectarian schools would be barred from converting.

Any student in the state could apply to a charter, but preference would go to students who reside in the district where the charter is located. If there were still more students than slots, the students would be selected randomly from a pool of eligible candidates.

The compromise legislation developed

by Ridge and House and Senate leaders was designed to address concerns ranging from funding to local control of the schools to who can teach in them.

Not everyone was satisfied. Sen. Richard Kasunic (D., Fayette) said the legislation represented an abandonment of public schools and warned that it could lead to higher property taxes to pay for the charter schools.

"How does this benefit those children who remain in the public system?" Kasunic said.

In the Senate, 28 of 30 Republicans voted for the bill, while just two of 18 Democrats, including Sen. Allyson Y. Schwartz of Philadelphia, supported it. Sen. Richard Tilghman (R., Montgomery) and Sen. Robert M. Tomlinson (R., Bucks) — who was upset that Ridge declined to support his pet issue of allowing slot machines at horse-racing tracks — were among the "no" votes.

The House vote was not expected to be so partisan. On Tuesday, Reps. Dwight Evans and Anthony Hardy Williams, two prominent Philadelphia Democrats, agreed to help Ridge and GOP leaders to pass the bill.

"I think it would be a huge mistake for Democrats or Republicans not to pass

"In reality the problem is still there. Just pick any of those schools and walk around."■

38. Philadelphia Inquirer

June 12, 1997

Harassment? Search me? Guards go through teachers' belongings

by Kevin Haney and Yvette Ousley
Daily News Staff Writers

On Feb. 13, School Superintendent David Hornbeck announced that he was transferring most of Olney High School's teachers because of the students' dismal performance.

It was nothing personal, he said. He just felt that he needed a new team of teachers there to work with his newly installed principal, Renee Yampolsky.

Yesterday, it got personal.

With the school year nearly over, and, for most, their careers at Olney ending, teachers were subjected to searches of their belongings as they left the building. In some cases, they were blocked by school police officers from leaving. The moves were ordered by district officials.

School officers, who have arrest powers, stationed themselves at a rear exit and blocked a parking lot exit with a school police vehicle, teachers said.

The school cops discussed getting a warrant to search the belongings of one uncooperative teacher. Officers allowed another teacher to leave only after they had searched her car trunk.

School district officials said they wanted to ensure that teachers weren't stealing district property in their last days at Olney.

School District spokesman Bill Epstein said no school property was found in the searches.

"It's not unusual. It's been done before," Epstein said last night of the searches, although he couldn't cite another instance.

"I've never known anything like this to happen," countered Jerry Jordan, a Philadelphia Federation of Teachers

union vice president.

"I have never been so humiliated in my life," said Grace Whitehair, a mathematics teacher with 37 years' experience. "I spent a thousand dollars on my classroom last year. What am I going to steal? The supplies we were never given?"

Whitehair said she was driving out of the school parking lot during her lunch break to run an errand, but was blocked by a school police vehicle.

"One of our security guards said I would not be able to get out unless they searched my trunk," she said.

She opened her trunk to gain her freedom, she said.

"It's just pure and simple harassment," said Michael Gallagher, a teacher with 26 years' experience.

Gallagher said he politely refused to let officers examine the boxes that he was removing — with the help of other teachers. The boxes contained books for outside classes for dropouts, he said.

Tony Colalongo, one of the teachers helping Gallagher, said he suggested officers get a warrant.

At least one officer liked the idea.

Marianne Walsh, who was the acting PFT school representative until yesterday, said she heard an officer talk on the school's radio band of "going to get a warrant" to search Gallagher's belongings.

"It's nuts," said Gallagher. "We're in Nazi Germany."

Mathematics teacher Ray Meinhart said the school cops wouldn't let him leave until they searched three boxes containing items he had collected over

his 19-year career.

He said he felt insulted, but let them look anyway.

District spokesman Epstein said no personal bags were to have been searched, and all searches were intended to be voluntary.

"There have been files missing at the school," Epstein said. He said he had no evidence the files were stolen.

Yampolsky told her boss that she notified Colalongo, who is a former PFT official, several weeks ago that teachers' items might be searched, according to Epstein. Colalongo said he wasn't told.

Yampolsky has become increasingly concerned with security since Hornbeck's announcement that teachers would be purged.

She installed locks on filing cabinets that hold student records and for several weeks locked class record books in her own office, teachers said.

She removed school trophies from a hallway case about three weeks ago, teachers said.

Yampolsky was not at school yesterday, teachers said. Epstein said he didn't know her whereabouts. The spokesman called the discussion about seeking a search warrant as "airwave talk" that went no further than a threat.

One district official, who requested anonymity, said district officials blame Olney's faculty for a sporadic three-day student walkout in April.

"The faculty at Olney has demonstrated that they can't be trusted," the official said.

Epstein said the searches were not linked to the earlier protests.■

this bill." Evans said before the House debate.

The most significant attempt to block the plan came from the Pennsylvania School Boards Association, which was unhappy with both the appeals process for organizations whose charter applications are denied and the funding repercussions on school districts.

As structured, the legislation provides for a two-year moratorium on appeals of local school boards' decisions to deny applications. After the ban, local rejections could be appealed to a state board, provided the applicant gets a required number of signatures on a petition.

The school board association argued unsuccessfully that two-thirds, rather than a simple majority, should be required to overturn local rejections.

Another key trouble spot was the fear of school districts that charter schools would cost too much. To counteract the problem, the legislation authorized \$7.5 million over two years for transition costs, as well as \$1 million to cover costs borne by school districts whose charter schools draw students who had previously attended nonpublic schools.

Thomas J. Gentzel, the school boards' lobbyist, said the transition funds would not address the continuing problem of school districts having to bear the costs of their regular schools plus their charter schools.

Another potential attack never occurred. Around lunchtime, an aide to Sen. Vincent J. Fumo (D., Phila.) said an amendment was being drafted to the bill calling for a pilot program for school choice.

Though Fumo was in Florida, another senator was going to offer it on his behalf. The amendment asked for \$30 million for a school-choice pilot program for Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Erie that

would have given some parents vouchers to send their children to nonpublic schools.

Ridge had unsuccessfully championed school choice in 1995, but it proved so controversial that he did not want vouchers to scuttle the charter-school bill. The Fumo amendment was never offered yesterday.

Fumo's earlier attempt at radically changing the bill — an amendment calling for restructuring the Philadelphia School District into 22 charter-school clusters with independently elected school boards — was stripped out of the legislation by a committee.

What was left was a bill that supporters said was as strong as any charter-school law in the country.

Charter schools would have permission to ignore traditional mandates regarding curriculum and faculty, but they would still have to comply with laws and policies dealing with health and safety, civil rights, and open meetings. Up to 25 percent of the teaching staff at charter schools would not have to be certified.

Students at charter schools would also have to meet the state's 180-day or 990-hour academic year requirements.

Five schools in the Philadelphia area say they are poised to open during the next academic year.

John Skief, a longtime teacher at West Philadelphia High School, wants to set up the Harambee Institute of Science and Technology for about 200 students from kindergarten through eighth grade, eventually adding a high school. Skief said the school would adopt high academic standards and educate for self-reliance "through an African-centered lens."

In addition, the Tilden Middle School in Southwest Philadelphia, under the auspices of the school district, has

applied to become an Internet Charter School and could begin operating as such by September.

Another is the Chester County Family Academy in West Chester, which would serve about 35 low-income, mostly minority children in kindergarten through third grade, in a "comprehensive services model" that would help families and children at the same time.

The fourth is the Chester School in Delaware County, which would serve at-risk children from kindergarten through second grade.

Harry Silcox, executive director of the Institute for Service Learning at the Philadelphia College of Textiles and Science, expects to be able to start a charter in January that would build its curriculum around service projects, such as tutoring younger children.

The most ardent charter advocates see such schools as a way to inject competition into the public system and demonstrate successful models of education. Skeptics fear they will siphon the better students from already struggling public schools.

A study by the U.S. Department of Education of the more than 200 charter schools in 1995-96 showed that charters are smaller than traditional public schools and serve roughly the same number of low-income and minority students, although the figures varied greatly by state.

The study did not answer the question of whether charters improve academic achievement for students who are not doing well in public schools. But Nathan said that more and more schools were having their charters renewed after demonstrating that they could meet the demanding goals they set. Only a handful — five or six — have been closed because of academic deficiencies or financial misdealings, he said. ■

41. Associated Press

06-12 4:34a

Official says some dropouts may be disguised as home schoolers

By CHARLES WOLFE Associated Press Writer

FRANKFORT, Ky. (AP) - A Kentucky Board of Education member says school dropout rates, already alarming, might actually be worse.

Jeffrey Mando, of Crescent Springs, said Wednesday that some children being counted as home-schooled may be dropouts in disguise.

Some superintendents in northern Kentucky told him parents of "problem" students in some districts have been

encouraged to take their children out of school under the guise of home schooling, Mando said.

Home-schooled children are not counted as dropouts, so the school district is not penalized. Nor do home-schooled children lose driver

licenses, as would dropouts from a public school. Mando said.

In an interview, Mando said he did not personally know a child who was falsely being recorded as home-schooled.

But when he told a group of superintendents in his home area that the state board was to receive a report on dropouts, "they said if you're going to tackle it, tackle the true issue," Mando said.

"I'm just saying there are people taking advantage of the home-school procedure, and it hurts home schools,"

Mando said.

The report by the state Department of Education said the dropout rate for grades 7-12 was 3.79 percent in the 1994-95 school year, up from 2.96 percent three years earlier.

For high school grades, the rate increased by more than a quarter - to 5.38 percent from 4.28 percent - over the same period.

Brian Gong, a Department of Education official, said the agency knows abuse of the home-schooling

privilege "may be a problem. We do not know how extensive that may be."

David Lanier, who heads the Winchester-based Kentucky Home Education Association, could not be reached for comment.

Dropout rate is among several factors in the state's complex accountability system for schools and districts. The department report says the rate should perhaps be given more weight, meaning it would become a larger part of a school district's overall score. ■

42. The Boston Globe

June 12, 1997

Honors college is given initial OK

By Peter J. Howe, Globe Staff

A plan to create an academically exclusive Commonwealth College in the University of Massachusetts at Amherst won unanimous but not final approval from the state Board of Higher Education yesterday.

Stanley Z. Koplik, state higher education chancellor, said he is confident the full board will formally vote on Tuesday to move ahead with developing plans by December for the 2,500-student program. It would combine the new college with affiliated Commonwealth Honors programs at the nine state colleges.

At a special meeting to discuss the plans, board member Aaron Spencer, founder and majority owner of the Pizzeria Uno chain and leader of the Commonwealth College effort, said it would largely amount to better marketing

of the 1,600-student honors program at UMass, which he called "probably one of the best-kept secrets in the state."

"The beauty of this project is that it costs us virtually nothing," Spencer said. "We're really taking something that's in place and improving it."

Commonwealth College would require entering students to have combined SAT scores of 1300 or above and be in the top 10 percent of their graduating class. The college program would include writing a thesis and taking advanced classes.

The other campuses' honors programs, if they meet as-yet undefined standards, would be upgraded to Commonwealth Honors, whose students could take classes at Amherst for a semester or a year.

Plans discussed yesterday involve no permanent faculty for Commonwealth

College. Instead, professors would be recruited from other state colleges and potentially from other states to teach for one or more semesters.

One unanswered question is whether Commonwealth College will require a new building at UMass-Amherst. UMass officials are scrutinizing the campus to see whether an old building could be converted, but some board members want a new building.

"We ought to house it in a fashion that supports the statement" that the state's higher education system is aiming to improve its academic reputation and standards, Spencer said.

Koplik said, "In a few years, we will have a significantly increased harvest and will reap Rhodes Scholars, Marshall Scholars. ... This education will rival any other education in the country, for \$10,000 to \$12,000." ■

43. The Boston Globe

June 12, 1997

Pressured to compensate, university says it does plenty

By Tina Cassidy, Globe Staff, 06/12/97

As Mayor Thomas M. Menino yesterday intensified his efforts to extract reparations from Harvard in exchange for allowing the university to proceed with development plans in Allston, school officials said they already do a great deal of good in the community.

Harvard spokesman Joe Wrinn said the university has always been a good neighbor, making its athletic facilities and museums available to the community at certain times.

Harvard deal may hurt city's efforts

A day after Menino demanded that Harvard compensate Boston through scholarships, Wrinn indicated that

Harvard is unlikely to change its policies to allow such a preference. The university, he said, is one of the few "blind admission" schools in the country, handing out scholarships based on need rather than preferences for athletics, academics, or geography.

About 60 undergraduates - those who listed Boston as their residence on the