

AAUW Pennsylvania
awards the
2020 Gateway to Equity Award
to
Susan Spicka
Executive Director
Education Voters PA



We know that Pennsylvania public schools are not funded enough or equitably, placing a burden on local school districts and in turn, property owners. We know that the state continues to increase funding for a tax credit scheme that provides private and religious school vouchers that benefit primarily well off families, leaving less money in state coffers to pay for public goods. We know that cyber charter schools strip the cost to educate a student in brick/mortar away from school districts, even though their operating expenses are much lower. We know students attending cyber charter schools are not excelling.

These issues are the foundation of the work of Susan Spicka, Executive Director of Education Voters Pennsylvania. Their mission parallels AAUW's – advocating for sound public education policy and laws. Susan's focus is fair and equitable funding, putting a lid on EITC/OSTC tax deductions for corporations, and commonsense cyber charter reform. To prove the current funding for cyber charter schools was wasteful, Susan conducted an analysis and published "**Commonsense Cyber Charter School Funding Reform Will Eliminate Wasteful Spending and Save \$290 Million in Taxpayer Money**". A copy of the report was delivered to every lawmaker in Harrisburg. As a result, representatives and senators that previously didn't pay attention to this issue are now engaged on this issue. Her report shined a good dose of sunlight on the waste in the current funding. Imagine what good will happen when the \$290 can be returned to school districts!



Susan's influence is comprehensive. She has been an important voice in the PA Schools Work strategy advocating for state budget increases for education and works collaboratively with several advocacy coalitions. She often provides testimony to Pennsylvania House and Senate committees.

In late 2019, Susan realized charter school reform was possible and there was not an organization or coalition focused solely on charter and cyber reform. So, she organized a grassroots coalition. This coalition provides a place for coordination and information sharing among groups and individuals for whom charter school reform is a top priority for the purposes



of providing expertise, educating the public, and securing passage of good charter school reform legislation.

Susan has been a friend of AAUW Pennsylvania for years, generously speaking at branch and district events, and informs the advocacy of the work of our Education Committee. We are very pleased to award Susan the 2020 Gateway to Equity Award for her vision, advocacy, and leadership.

The Gateway to Equity award will be presented to Susan at the AAUW Pennsylvania convention on Saturday, April 25th and she will be our dinner speaker.