

Charter Schools Conceptually and In Practice Are a Scourge on the Education Landscape In Ohio

Not all charter schools and their management companies are rife with fraud and corruption. Nor are all charters low-performing. Nor do all of them shortchange students to stack-up shameless profits. Nor do all of them practice nepotism in hiring, cherry-picking students, and closing without notice. However, the charter industry, as a whole, is rife with all of the above. Even if the charter industry would be free of all these negatives (and more), the concept and practice of chartering is wrong-headed.

The charter industry is inefficient within its own parameters and causes the whole of provisions for education to be inefficient. Historically the state has allocated between 34 to 45 percent of its General Revenue Fund (GRF) to K-12 education. Currently, about 40% of the state GRF is allocated to K-12 education.

Due to the demands of other state programs and services, the percentage of the state General Revenue Budget allocated to K-12 education will not likely increase substantially in the future.. Tax funds siphoned away from school districts for charters (and vouchers) duplicates facilities and programs which causes inefficient use of tax funds and reduces educational opportunities for students in both districts and charters.

Since 1900, the state forced school districts to consolidate to expand educational opportunities and to use tax dollars more efficiently. In 1900 there were about 3500 school districts. Ten thousand one room school buildings were in operation. Now there are 612 districts and no one room schools in operation. However, the state has issued more than 600 charters to private individuals, 300 or so of which have closed. Most charters serve less students than the school districts that the state forced to close. If smaller is finer, then why doesn't the state force deconsolidation of school districts?

The smaller charter enrollments typically reduce breadth of programs and opportunities for students. The charters duplicate programs and services which exacerbates the inefficiencies. What are state officials thinking?

Charter schools are largely deregulated. For the sake of students and taxpayers there is no justification for a differential between public schools and charters in the matter of regulations. The original idea of chartering was that some teachers and parents would propose to a board of education that they would create innovative, creative programming and demonstrate better results in exchange for reduced regulations. As an industry, charters have been neither creative nor innovative. Nor has the charter industry outpaced traditional public schools in academic performance; however, reduced regulations have spawned fraud and corruption coupled with little or no accountability and transparency.

Charter schools have no constitutional basis.

The charter school experiment in Ohio has been rife with fraud and corruption and low performance. Billions in tax funding has been stolen and wasted. The experiment is a failure. There is no justification for this experiment to continue.