

Steve Dyer: Charter school funding doubles last 14 years, Triples over last 20

Former State Representative, Stephen Dyer has found that 97% of Ohio's public school students receive less state aid than the average charter school student.

The charter school industry in Ohio has never been adequately regulated and scrutinized by state government. Fraud and corruption, combined with low performance in the charter industry, should be a great source of embarrassment to State officials in Ohio. But not so. The legislature and Governor keep expanding funding to the charter debacle. For-profit charter management companies are piling up huge profits as the charter schools produce dismal results. State officials in Ohio should be held accountable for the lack of holding charter schools accountable.

Charter School Funding Doubles last 14 years, Triples over last 20

Hidden amid all the recent voucher issues is the fact that 97 percent of Ohio's public school students receive less state aid than the average Ohio Charter School student

Stephen Dyer

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I decided to take another look at Charter School funding recently and was bowled over by the amount of largesse Ohio's lawmakers and Governor have thrown their way. According to the latest funding report available, the state is now shoveling \$1.56 billion to Ohio's Charter Schools. That is about \$130 million more than the state's legislative service commission estimated it would cost taxpayers this year and \$160 million more than the commission estimated it would cost *next year!*

View the [graphic](#).

More amazing still: The \$1.56 billion Charter Schools are set to receive this year is more state aid than the state's so-called "Big 8" major urban school districts receive *combined*.

View the [chart](#).

That's right.

Charter School get more state aid than Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo and Youngstown receive. You can even throw in South-Western City Schools, Hamilton City Schools in Butler County and Shaker Heights for good measure before you reach the amount of state funding Ohio's Charter Schools receive.

Just so you know, there are 126,905 students in Ohio's Charter Schools. There are 167,111 students in Ohio's Big 8 school districts.

That means each of Ohio's Charter School students receive \$12,255 in state aid. And each of Ohio's Big 8 students receive \$7,790 — less than 2/3 that amount.

There are 30 Ohio school districts (out of 613, so less than 5%) that receive more state aid than the average Ohio Charter School student. Two of those districts are Kelleys Island and College Corner — two immensely small, outlier districts. Of the remaining 28, 22 are small town or rural school districts (places like Symmes Valley in Lawrence County or Trimble in Athens County), 2 are part of the Big 8 (Canton and Youngstown) and 4 are smaller urbans like Warren and East Cleveland.

Those 30 districts represent 3 percent of the state's public school population.

So, yes.

A full 97 percent of Ohio's public school students receive less state aid than the average Ohio Charter School Student.

That's because nearly 80 percent of all the districts that receive more per pupil state funding than the average Charter School student are rural districts.

Charter School apologists will try telling you that Charter Schools cost you less. But don't fall for that. They cost far more in state funding. They receive federal funding. Some receive local property tax funding. And they also get to have taxpayers pay for their transportation and other needs as well.

The state now provides so much state aid to Charter Schools that the average Charter School now spends about \$1,000 more per pupil than the average Ohio Public School District — *even including their local property tax revenue!*

What Charter Schools *do* cost is the ability of the state to actually pay for its own public school funding formula. All while delivering pretty poor performance (which this state's Charter sector has been pretty consistently doing since, you know, *forever*).

It will be interesting to see if the state legislature decides to address this massive increase in Charter School funding since it's so much more than what the Legislative Service Commission predicted last year.

Can you imagine, for example, if Ohio's public school districts were receiving 17 percent more state funding than projected, as Ohio's Charter Schools are receiving this year?

How fast would Gov. Mike DeWine call the Ohio General Assembly back into session to ferret out all the "waste, fraud and abuse"? How many rando YouTubers would be knocking on the doors of public school buildings, demanding to see the kids?

Wanna bet how many knock on the doors of Ohio's Charter School buildings, even though the largest taxpayer fraud in Ohio history was perpetrated by an Ohio Charter School (who couldn't prove it was educating kids the taxpayers were paying it to educate)?

Yeah. Not happening.

But perhaps it *should*. You know. Just to be sure.