Stephen Dyer's September 25, 10th Period: 1 out of every 3 lowest performing Ohio charter schools got state bonuses for being "high quality".

The political leadership that controls Ohio's expenditures either has no clue about the tax-wasting charter school industry in Ohio or is indifferent to efficient and effective use of state fiscal resources.

Former legislator, attorney Stephen Dyer, in yet another 10th Period post, provides the facts about this sick, fraud ridden, mostly private industry.

1 out of every 3 lowest performing Ohio Charter Schools got state bonuses for being "High Quality"

Some schools, despite being on the state's lowest-performing schools list since 2018 have received "High Quality" grants from the state every year since 2020.

Stephen Dyer

Sep 25, 2026

Guys, I'm not sure the state's recent release of $20 million in high-performing charter school grants will actually grow high-performing charter schools here in Ohio.

Why am I so pessimistic?

Well, since the 2019-2020 school year, Ohio has done a mini version of this called the Quality Community and Stem School Grant Program. The state has spent $473 million on this program — jumping from $30 million a year in the beginning to $115 million last year.

The idea is to provide a funding boost to the best charter schools in the state.

However, there is also a list I've written about before called the Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools, which the state describes this way:

"In alignment with federal requirements (Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA] section 1111(c)(4)(D)) and Ohio's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) state plan, ***the state's lowest-performing schools*** are identified as Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) schools."

Guys. Guess what? Would it shock you to learn that $29 million of the $473 million the state has spent on "high quality" charter schools has gone to charters that have been on the state's lowest-performing schools list, sometimes since before the "high quality" program started doling out money?

Well. It shouldn't.

Spreadsheet

Here they are. You'll see, for example, that the Charles School at Ohio Dominican University has received $4.1 million in so-called "quality" charter school funding from the state — getting some every year it's been available. ***Yet they have been on the state's lowest-performing schools list before the "quality" charter school grant ever existed!***

And they're not alone.

Citizens Academy Southeast received $7.2 million since the 2022-2023 school year, yet last year they landed on the lowest-performing schools list — perhaps suggesting the quality charter school grant program isn't making charter schools better for kids?

I dunno, maybe?

CC4425 9.30.26 Wednesday

Zenith Academy has been on the lowest-performing schools list since 2018. But that didn't stop the state from giving the school more than $1 million a year each of the last 3 school years because it's so "high quality".

Thankfully, none of the $20 million in federal awards announced this month is going to a school on the lowest-performing schools list.

However, the money is going to some pretty suspect schools.

Take Towpath Trail High School in Akron.

Their 4-year graduation rate is 49.9%. That's 17 percentage points *worse* than the lowest-performing public school district — Dayton.

But wait, you say. Isn't Towpath Trail a dropout recovery school?

Yes, Sen. Husted and Vivek. It is.

But you know what I (and, importantly, ***state law***) say about Ohio's Dropout Recovery charter schools, right? They don't have to have a single dropout in them. And only 50% plus 1 student has to be in academic crisis.

Here's how the state defines who may attend "Dropout Recovery" Charter Schools:

"(1) Any community school that operates a drug recovery program in cooperation with a court; or

(2) Any community school in which the majority of students are enrolled in a dropout prevention and recovery program operated by the school that meets the following criteria:

(a) The program serves only students not younger than sixteen years of age and not older than twenty-one years of age;

(b) The program enrolls students who, at the time of their initial enrollment, either, or both, are at least one grade level behind their cohort age groups or experience crises that significantly interfere with their academic progress such that they are prevented from continuing their traditional programs."

Yeah. I'm not sure that's gonna work out, using federal money to expand Towpath Trail to Youngstown.

You know how else I know? Because Ohio got this same grant in 2015, importantly, after *lying* to federal officials. Then the grant was for $71 million. And, despite the warnings from me and others about how there aren't enough high-performing charters in Ohio to warrant that kind of money, the state only spent $8 million of the $71 million allotted.

That's right. Ohio returned $63 million.

Look. Maybe Ohio charters have turned a corner. Maybe they're going to take this opportunity to self reflect and do better.

And maybe the Browns win the Super Bowl.

But I'm guessing it's going to devolve into what the state program did — funding poor performing charter schools because there are simply so many of them here that it's impossible to spend $105 million federal dollars without funding at least a few crappy ones.

Truly sad. And disgusting.