

The Ohio Coalition for

Equity & Adequacy

Of School Funding

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Due no later than January 2, 2016

1. Adopt a resolution to invoice the state for all charter funds deducted from the district from January 1999 through FY 2016 and distribute to all state officials and the media. (see the back of this sheet for a sample resolution)
2. Develop a plan for a community meeting to discuss and receive feedback on the current education "reform" agenda.
3. Use knowyourcharter.com at least once.

**Resolution to Invoice Ohio Department of Education for
Past Charter School Deductions from State Funding**

WHEREAS, it is the statutory duty of the Logan-Hocking Local School District Board of Education to deliver the educational programs and services to the school children of the Logan-Hocking Local School District, and

WHEREAS, the members of the Board are elected by the Logan-Hocking school community to ensure an effective, efficient, vibrant and productive system, and

WHEREAS, the elected board of education is responsible to the community including taxpayers, parents and other patrons, as well as the state, and

WHEREAS, the charter school industry now extracts in the range of one billion dollars (\$1,000,000,000) ANNUALLY from public school districts across the State of Ohio, and

WHEREAS, school district boards of education have no control of students, financing, educational programming and student outcomes who enroll in charter schools, and

WHEREAS, charter schools as a group in Ohio demonstrate low academic performance compared to traditional public schools, and

WHEREAS, the fraud and corruption in charter schools, as reported repeatedly in the public media, has made Ohio the laughing stock throughout the nation, and

WHEREAS, Ohio has been dubbed as the "Wild, Wild West" in charter operations, and

WHEREAS, the Logan-Hocking Local School District has lost a total of \$4,729,901 in state AND local funding to charter schools over the period FY 2002 to FY 2015, and

WHEREAS, this deduction has reduced programs and services to Logan-Hocking Local School District students, and

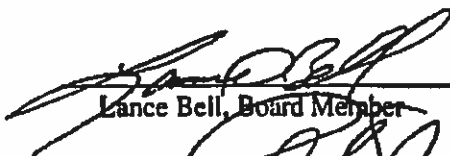
WHEREAS, the Logan-Hocking Local School District Board of Education has a fiduciary responsibility to the students and taxpayers of the District, be it therefore

RESOLVED that the Board of Education direct the Treasurer of the District to invoice the State of Ohio for all the funds extracted from the Logan-Hocking Local School District for charter school students.

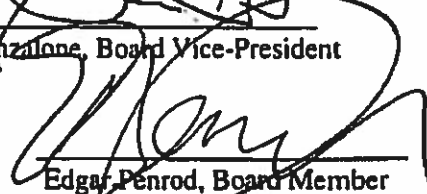
Adopted 10/26/15


Catherine Krumlauf, Board President


Dr. Scott Anzalone, Board Vice-President


Lance Bell, Board Member


Corby Leach, Board Member


Edgar Penrod, Board Member


Paul F. Shaw CPA RSBFO CGMA, Treasurer


Stephen C. Stirn, Superintendent

CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Ohio must fund charter schools in a way that does not penalize local public schools; and

WHEREAS, children in local public schools should not be deprived of precious resources while children in charters receive the resources they need; and

WHEREAS, any means of funding charters must take into account its impact on the more than 90% of Ohio public school students who are not in charters, as well as the needs of those who do attend charters; and

WHEREAS, the state provides \$ _____ in per-pupil state-share funding to _____ School District, but deducts at least \$ _____ from _____ School District's state funding for each student that enrolls in a charter school; and

WHEREAS, charter school enrollment represents only _____% of the student population in _____ School District, but charter school funding deductions will account for _____% of total state funding received by the district; and

WHEREAS, local taxpayers must subsidize the difference between the per-pupil state-share received by the district and the higher per-pupil charter school payment deducted by the state, and/or, such costs are borne by district students through reductions in educational services and higher fees; and

WHEREAS, the continual shift towards asking more of the local taxpayer is exacerbated by local school funding subsidies made to the charter school industry; and

WHEREAS, Ohio is one of only two states in the nation that does not allow the state department of education to know the identity of the student associated with Statewide Student Identifier (SSID) numbers in order to prevent fraud, abuse and/or mistakes in per-pupil payments to charter schools and deductions from school districts; and

WHEREAS, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) has raised concerns about the increasingly common practice of creating duplicate and/or multiple Statewide Student Identifier (SSID) numbers for the same student in the Education Management Information System (EMIS), which can result in duplicate and/or multiple payments to charter schools unless discovered and corrected; and

WHEREAS, the Auditor of State has testified before the Ohio General Assembly regarding the lack of safeguards in Ohio's charter school funding and reporting system, stating that as "amply demonstrated over the past several years, the 'honor system' used in Ohio is open to abuse," noting that "during interviews, we have discovered that schools will often generate a new SSID for a student when they have difficulty finding that student's previously assigned SSID;" and

WHEREAS, Ohio law allows a charter school to set a lower standard for student residency verification and documentation than is required by the school districts from which the charter school seeks per-pupil school funding deductions; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that we urge the Ohio General Assembly to directly fund charter schools in the amount of the full per-pupil charter school payment and stop including charter students in a school district's funding and deducting from it; and

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED that in the alternative, we urge the Ohio General Assembly to limit the per-pupil charter school deduction to the actual per-pupil amount the school district has received from the state, with any additional dollars needed to meet the established per-pupil funding for charter school students to be provided through a separate state budget line-item specifically for charter schools.

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED that we urge the Ohio General Assembly to change existing law to allow ODE to have access to names of students, with necessary privacy protections consistent with federal law, and require ODE to generate statewide school reports by student name and SSID number so that the state can analyze and cross-check the timing of student withdrawals and subsequent enrollments against EMIS data for completeness and accuracy.

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED that we urge the Ohio General Assembly to set a statewide standard for documentation required by charter schools to verify student residency and require such documentation to be provided to the student's school district of residency before initiating a per-pupil charter school deduction from that district.

CHARTER ACCOUNTABILITY

HOW OHIO CHARTER SCHOOLS ARE PERFORMING

HOME SIGN UP NEWS SHARE YOUR STORY

KnowYourCharter.com

A new online tool, **KnowYourCharter.com**, offers detailed information on how Ohio's charter schools are performing and they compare with traditional public schools. It not only provides access to the state's most recent Report Card information, but improves transparency by aggregating this and other relevant data at a single, easy-to-use website.

At **KnowYourCharter.com**, you can:

- Access data from 18 different spreadsheets for comparison and analysis
- Compare school districts' academic performance with that of area charter schools
- See how much money is being deducted from state aid to public school districts to go to charters

Compare Schools

Using your school district or charter school name, you can get the information on how charter schools are performing and how they compare with traditional public schools.

ex. Newark City

OHIO'S CHARTER SCHOOLS

This new tool is designed to help the citizens of Ohio better understand how publicly-funded charter schools are faring and how they compare to traditional public schools. This website provides data from the Ohio Department of Education on how schools are performing, the percentage of money spent in the classroom, and how much money is deducted from state aid to public school districts and transferred to charter schools. Additional data can also be found by clicking on the name of the district and the name of a charter school.

With nearly 400 charter schools operating in Ohio with less accountability than traditional public schools, it is important that parents, educators and policymakers be able to see the comparative performance of charter schools, as well as what they are costing local school districts.

Ohio's students deserve great public schools whether they are "traditional" schools or taxpayer-funded charter schools. We hope that The Ohio Charter School Accountability Project will provide some of the information necessary for parents, taxpayers and policy makers to make wise and cost-effective choices. Nothing is more important to the future of our state.

SHARE YOUR STORY

Successes or failures at your school and we'll add them to our growing list of parents like yourself.

SHARE NOW

District:
Newark City (Newark)

Performers Index: State Funding Per Student: \$4,075.18 % Spent in Classroom: 84.7% Avg Teacher Experience: 10 yrs Total Transferred to Charters: \$4,819,548.54

Charter School

Charter School	Grade D	State Funding Per Student	% Spent in Classroom	Avg Teacher Experience	% Transferred from District
Newark Digital Academy	NA	\$6,110.79	89.7%	11 yrs	\$1,445,965.00
Virtual Community School Of Ohio	D	\$6,944.18	87.6%	16 yrs	\$98,172.95
Par Excellence Academy	C	\$6,868.76	83.3%	0 yrs	\$76,618.72
Ohio Virtual Academy	C	\$6,131.42	91.2%	10 yrs	\$537,493.63
Electronic Classroom Of Tomorrow	D	\$6,440.29	89.4%	8 yrs	\$458,664.05
Treca Digital Academy	NA	\$6,284.77	85.3%	11 yrs	\$119,279.14
Dakstone Community School	C	\$28,658.33	82.8%	3 yrs	\$84,289.50
Ohio Connections Academy, Inc	C	\$6,142.16	82.7%	9 yrs	\$73,323.76
Buckeye On-Line School For Success	C	\$6,334.51	89.4%	9 yrs	\$63,197.41
Alternative Education Academy	D	\$6,348.79	79.4%	4 yrs	\$25,212.47
Renaissance Academy	D	\$6,753.78	88.0%	10 yrs	\$18,390.26
Faithful High School	NA	\$7,251.5	89.7%	5 yrs	\$2,813.76
Early College Academy	NA	\$6,103.23	82.2%	13 yrs	\$2,324.42

100 PUBLIC AND CHARTER SCHOOLS

100 data comes from public sources, principally the Ohio Department of Education

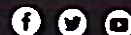
HOME NEWS SHARE YOUR STORY PRESS INQUIRIES

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Zip Code *

STAY CONNECTED



OEA
OHIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

INNOVATION
OHIO

The Ohio Charter School Accountability Project is a joint venture of the Ohio Education Association and Innovation Ohio. All data comes from public sources, principally the Ohio Department of Education.

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OSBA Capital Conference
November 10, 2015 2:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.
Room C114-115

William L. Phillis, Executive Director
Ohio Coalition for Equity & Adequacy of School Funding

Survival of the common public school system

If you are interested in a presentation laced in political correctness or one that will curry political favor with the inside-the-I-270-Beltway crowd, you will be disappointed in this one. I have no interest in tip-toeing around a discussion of the failed charter school industry. I have come to the conclusion that the charter industry in Ohio is not compatible with the public common school system. In fact, it is antithetical to the common system. The Washington State Supreme Court recently ruled the state's charter school law unconstitutional because the charters are not common schools.

School vouchers, tuition tax credits, education savings plans and other money-follows-the-child schemes are also a significant threat to the existence of a viable common school system but, the focus of this presentation will be on the implications of the charter industry.

The charter choice argument is a hoax. People don't want choice; they want a high quality thorough and efficient common school system. The charter choice in Ohio is typically of lower quality than the traditional system. If school districts were funded at a constitutionally-required level, sufficient choice would be available. That would give relevance to the concept of school choice.

This presentation involves three broad categories: (1) roots of public school bashing; (2) the rationale for "just say no" to charters and; (3) what public common school boards and other advocates can do to rid Ohio of the \$7 billion failed boondoggle that started as a \$10 million experiment in 1999.

Public common school personnel have much less influence in state education policy decisions than in past decades. Public education policy in this era is primarily a product of persons who have not been practitioners in public education have no certification in public education; and have spent little or no time in traditional public schools; and have a privatization of public education agenda. These persons talk of data-driven, decision-making but then ignore data regarding the mostly failing charter industry. These non-education people wield a great amount of influence over the education policy agenda.

Roots of public school bashing

A manufactured crisis

The Reagan Administration was not fond of teachers unions and was intrigued with the school voucher idea that Milton Friedman attempted to foist on America as far back as the 1950s. Reagan's Commission on Education Excellence issued the flawed A Nation at Risk report. The report was short on evidence and long on anti-public school rhetoric. When President Reagan received the report, he remarked that he was glad the report advocated prayer in schools and vouchers. The report spoke to neither issue.

The A Nation at Risk report was used to discredit the public common school and advance the education choice agenda which became a political tool. A crisis in public education was manufactured.

The 1995 book, Manufactured Crisis, by David C. Berliner and Bruce J. Biddle, on page 139 states, "As far as the public was concerned, the Manufactured Crisis began on April 26, 1983-the date, when amidst much fanfare, the Reagan White House released its critical report on the status of American schools, A Nation at Risk. In many ways this report was the 'mother of all critiques' of American education."

The bashing of public education had always been a favorite pastime of Main Street America but the A Nation at Risk report took the bashing to the White House and the nation's Capitol. The political bashing trickled down to all levels of government and seeped into the business community. This high level bashing of public education permeated the American psyche. All polls since that era indicate that Americans rate their local public schools much higher than they rate public schools across the nation—an indication that the movement to discredit public education has been successful.

The continuous harangue against public education has elevated support for school vouchers and charters and has influenced some people to suggest replacement of the "government" system with a new paradigm premised on markets and parental choice. In a 1990 book, Politics, Markets and America's Schools, authors John E. Chubb and Terry M. Moe, promote the market/choice agenda. They proffer that government-controlled schools, i.e., "its institutions of democratic control" are the root of the "problem" in American education. In other words, the "problem" with public schools is that they are democratically-controlled. On page 25 they recommend a wholly different system, "one built around school autonomy and parent-student choice rather than direct democratic control."

On page 191, Chubbs and Moe state, "The way to get effective schools, rather, is to recognize that the problem of ineffective performance is really a deep-seated institutional problem that arises from the most fundamental properties of democratic control."

Further on page 205, Chubbs and Moe state, "Democratic control cannot 'make' teachers into efficacious professionals they want to be-for democratic control is the real problem."

The President George H. W. Bush factor

It is not a stretch to suggest that the 1983 flawed A Nation at Risk report set the stage for a search for alternatives to the traditional public common school. Public education became a significant political issue/agenda for some. The Bush administration used the report to advance the choice agenda even though a subsequent government study discredited the A Nation at Risk report.

The Sandia National Laboratories, a division of the U.S. Department of Energy, issued a federal government-sponsored study in 1990 that largely contradicted the findings of the A Nation at Risk report. Sandia researchers looked at the evidence regarding the performance of American schools and found that the claim of a decline in achievement scores to be false. The original motivation for the Sandia study seemed to be that of finding support for the claims made in the A Nation at Risk report. But the findings of that group of researchers were different as the report states: "Although we have shown that there are indeed some serious problems at all levels of education, we believe that much of the current rhetoric goes well beyond assisting reform, and actually hinders it. Much of the 'crisis' commentary today professes total system-wide failure in education. Our research shows that this is simply not true. Many claim that the purpose of the rhetoric is to garner funding for reform; but, if these funds are used to alleviate a nonexistent 'crisis,' education and educators will suffer in the long run."

In early 1990, President Bush said publicly that he wanted to be the "Education President" based on the supposed shortfall of American education. The Sandia report contradicted many of the findings then being made by the Bush administration, claims that undergirded the administration's America 2000. The Sandia report was then suppressed for political reasons. However, some copies of the report slipped out.

In a September 1991 address, President Bush stated, "The ringing of the school bell sounds an alarm, a warning to all of us who care about the state of American education...Every day brings new evidence of crisis."

It is no mystery that the Bush administration ditched the Sandia report.

Bush's America 2000, later to be Clinton's Goals 2000, which came out of Bush's Education Summit of Governor's (published in the spring of 1991) promoted tax-supported vouchers for private schools.

Meanwhile, business tycoons began to consider the great amount of gold in the education hills. Chris Whittle, a close friend and ally of Bush's Secretary of Education, Lamar Alexander, formed a new business, the Edison Project, which proposed a nationwide network of for-profit schools, possibly one in each congressional district in the United States. Whittle's cozy relationship with the White House could have created a vast empire of for-profit schools had Bush been re-elected. However, the corporate education complex was born.

Meanwhile, back at the Ohio ranch, on November 25, 1991, President Bush came to Ohio at the request of Governor Voinovich to speak to an education gathering. One of the thrusts in his speech, and possibly his main thrust, was to advocate that Ohio make a school voucher available to every student. That message was not well-received by the elected State Board of Education, the public education community or the public in general. The November 26, 1991 *Cincinnati Enquirer* stated,

Bush: Give private schools money Ohio audience wary of proposal by Dick Kimmins, *Enquirer* Columbus Bureau

President Bush strongly endorsed public subsidies for non-public schools in a speech here Monday, saying it was time to “unleash market forces” to improve education.

“We won’t have full confidence, full choice in education until the dollar follows the scholar,” Bush said. “I expect Ohio to go the full distance in giving choice to parents. “By unleashing market forces, we can encourage creative competition among public, private and parochial schools” and improve the quality of education, Bush said. The president’s remarks to about 2,500 children and adults at Veteran’s Memorial Auditorium generally were well-received, except for his advocacy of some form of public aid to non-public schools. “That is not my idea of the proper use of public funds,” said Mary Lazarus, a state school board member from Cincinnati. Cincinnati’s other representative on the 21-member board, Ted Price, said public subsidies should stay with public schools. “I think private and public school both have to be strong,” he said. Even Gov. George Voinovich, a Republican, quickly backed away from Bush’s unqualified endorsement of giving parents choice. “It is something that should be looked at,” Voinovich said. He said he would appoint a study group in a few weeks.

The Voinovich/Brennan factor

But Governor Voinovich and his friend and campaign supporter David Brennan liked the voucher idea. Voinovich, in that era, foisted Bush’s choice and market-driven combo on the citizens of Ohio, even though Ohio citizens were not clamoring for an alternative to public education.

Voinovich formed the Parent Choice Commission and put Brennan in charge. (The current State Superintendent was a member of Voinovich’s Parent Choice Commission.)

The first product of the Commission was the Cleveland Voucher program. Brennan set up his own voucher schools but then, in due time, lobbied for a more profitable alternative to public education—charter schools. The Chris Whittle idea, a for-profit education business at public expense, came to Ohio. Brennan, at this date, has received a billion dollars for his bashing of “government” schools and his operation of charters. The Ohio Supreme Court just recently permitted Brennan to keep physical assets of charters he operates—all purchased with public tax dollars. Brennan has been handsomely rewarded for the millions of dollars he has put into selected campaign coffers.

The Bush 43/Senator Edward Kennedy education factor

The Bush 43/Senator Edward Kennedy coalition that created the wrong-headed No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation supplied fuel to continue the anti-public education movement. President Obama has provided support for NCLB and set forth his signature Race to the Top project. These federal policies, coupled with runaway charter and voucher funding at the federal and state levels, have diminished the capacity of the traditional public school system to operate as effectively as it should.

The public common school system is not a failure. Schools that serve a high proportion of poverty students and children with disabilities score low on state achievement tests. This fact has given charter and voucher advocates the license to paint the entire common school system as a failure.

On average, charter school achievement results in poverty environments are lower than peer traditional schools. Now the charter advocates want to change the rating system for charter schools.

The public common school system did not create poverty in urban centers and various rural areas. Yet, public schools are held accountable for the effects of poverty within the district boundaries; and are expected to completely overcome the educational deficits inherent in poverty students.

The takeaway from this section of the presentation is that public common school personnel should stop being intimidated by the unfounded accusations that the common school system is a failure. The bogus A Nation at Risk report was largely debunked by the Sandia report but because of the Bush 41 political agenda, the report was buried and the public school bashing by top government officials continued. This influenced many parents to seek alternatives, and encouraged many corporate folks to turn a profit on the backs of students.

Thus, the rise of the charter industry has been bolstered by the manufactured crisis in public education. The Obama administration has followed in the footsteps of previous administrations in this regard.

Ohio's \$7 billion experiment

The charter industry has extracted \$7 billion from Ohio school districts since 1999. The original \$10.8 million charter experiment, without any evidence that it was efficacious, was increased to a \$50 million project the second year. It is now a \$1 billion annual project.

The original idea of charter schools was to permit groups of teachers and parents to innovate, create and experiment, free from some regulations and bureaucratic encumbrances, but within the jurisdiction of the school district. However, the market forces/choice advocates hijacked the idea and now charters currently remove a billion dollars annually from the school districts of Ohio.

The rationale for "just say no" to the charter school experiment

There is a continuum of opinions in the public common school community as to the role of the charter industry in public education; and if there is a role, how charters should be regulated. For example, in August 2015, the OSBA Platform Committee approved dropping the OSBA policy position that limits the sponsorship of charter schools to district boards of education and adds language that holds charter schools and their operators to the same compliance and reporting requirements as public schools. The OSBA Platform Committee approved three other resolutions regarding charter school transparency and accountability as well. Hence, opinions and policy recommendations are changing. This is not to be critical of this OSBA policy platform change. It merely illustrates how opinions/recommendations change.

My opinion has evolved to the point of: "just say no." This may be a mere voice crying in the wilderness. But that is where I have landed in view of \$7 billion dollars having been removed from the common school system to a failed experiment that is detrimental to the common school system.

Some would say that the "just say no" stance is unrealistic and that it renders the advocate of that position to be irrelevant in the education policy debate. It is true that the ideological and corporate forces supporting charters are formidable. It is true that the charter advocacy organizations and charter chains at the state and national level are well-funded by foundations and hedge fund managers and are growing in strength. It is true that the deregulated charter industry wields tremendous political power in education policy development by virtue of unlimited budgets for campaign contributions and for high paid, politically-powerful lobbyists. The charter industry is now becoming a Wall Street venture.

Understanding all of that, I still suggest that we—"just say no."

Horace Mann said that the public school is the greatest discovery of mankind. It is the only institution in our society that has the capacity to serve all the children of all the people to perpetuate the common good. The charter industry is beyond repair. The charter industry is private; the common school is public.

Philosophical divide

Since the corporate community has entered into the business of running "public" schools, there is no way to effectively reform the charter industry. Traditional public schools are operated by communities via elected boards of education using democratic processes. Charter schools are private ventures.

The public common school is owned by the community. State policy and community involvement ensure transparency and accountability. Charter schools operate separate and apart from the taxpaying community.

The philosophical divide is clear: democracy vs. market forces; community control vs. private control; accountability and transparency vs. confidentiality; private benefit vs. public common good; and community vs. private club. The governance structure of the charter industry is varied but is fundamentally convoluted and is in contrast with the democratic process.

Who is in control of charters? Ohio Department of Education (ODE)? (ODE is a huge part of the problem.) Sponsors/authorizers? Charter boards? For-profit management companies? Non-profit management companies? Who?

Who elects or appoints those who control non-profit charter sponsors? Not the public. Who elects or appoints the charter school board? Not the public. To whom is the for-profit or non-profit management company accountable? Not the public. In fact, what part of the charter industry is accountable to the public or the public school district boards which provide the funds to the charters? Since district boards of education provide the funds for charter students, shouldn't someone in the charter complex be accountable to the elected boards that supply the funds?

HB 2 will not correct the unworkability of the charter governance structure.

Charters are not accountable to the communities in which their students reside. There is no public governance and thus no accountability to the public. The only public aspect of charterville is the public money. This explains much of the fiscal fraud and low performance within the charter industry.

The inefficiency of two systems of publicly-supported education

At the beginning of the 1900s there were 10,000 one-room schools and about 3,000 school districts in Ohio. The 1912 constitutional amendment to make provision by law "for the organization, administration and control of the public school system supported by public funds" set in motion a series of laws and actions that greatly reduced the number of school districts. By the time the elected State Board of Education was organized in 1956, about 1,300 districts were still operating. 20 years later in 1976, only 617 remained. This tremendous school district reorganization effort was motivated by a quest for financial efficiency and improvement in education programming.

The charter movement is counter to the intent of the 1912 amendment (Article VI, §3). Since 1999, Ohio has allowed the creation of 600 new charter governance units, 210 of which have completely failed for various reasons. In fact, some of them never opened. The charter industry is inefficient and creates inefficiencies in the traditional common school system.

Think for a moment about how ineffective and inefficient it is for the state to establish two systems of education. The counterfeit system (charters) typically is operated by non-professionals in education. Think of the disruption of students with the closing of 210 charters. Students are displaced sometimes on the opening day of school. But charter closures constitute only the beginning of the problem with charters.

The inordinate amount of funds the charter industry spends on marketing (one online school of 600 students spent \$185,000 in FY 2012 on marketing); on campaign contributions (the ECOT operator Bill Lager is one of Ohio's largest political contributors); on administration (a comparison study of the percentage of funds devoted to administration in 2012 indicates that charters spend twice as much as traditional schools); the cozy business relationships that some charter companies have with subsidiary or associated companies divert funds away from charter classrooms (a Columbus area charter board in the Imagine Schools, Inc. chain paid \$4,500 per pupil to rent from an Imagine Schools, Inc. subsidiary company); the nepotism that is commonplace in the charter industry, (in some cases, it seems the whole family is on the payroll of a charter or is in a consultant capacity.)

Charters operated by the Gulen Islamic movement

A recent article in *USA Today* and one in the *Daily Sabah* shed light on the Gulen movement which operates about 150 charter schools in the U.S., including 19 in Ohio. The *Daily Sabah* reported on an October 26, 2015 press conference at the National Press Club in Washington D.C., in which the international law firm of Amsterdam and Partners LLP announced its engagement on behalf of the Republic of Turkey to assist in the global investigation into the activities of the U.S.-based Gulen Movement.

The Gulen Movement has been accused of a coup attempt in Turkey. This movement is headed by Fethullah Gulen, a Turkish Islamic Cleric living in exile in Saylorsburg, PA. Without considering the issues involved in the political battle between Gulen and the Turkish government, should a movement so engrossed in controversial international politics be permitted to operate charter schools in Ohio and across the nation? This movement is accused of attempting to overthrow a foreign government that is allied with the U.S.!

The Turkish government has asked the United States to extradite Fethullah Gulen.

An October 30/November 1, 2015 *USA Today* weekend article—Turkish Sect Funded Congress Travel—based on a *USA Today* investigation indicates that the Gulen Movement has secretly funded more than 200 trips to Turkey for members of Congress and staff since 2008—possibly in violation of federal law. Back at the Ohio ranch, several state and local officials, including the Speaker of the House, have traveled to Turkey, courtesy of the Gulenists.

Public funds—private property

The White Hat Management charter company claimed the physical property purchased with public money and kept it with the approval of the Ohio Supreme Court.

This Ohio charter industry is beyond repair. It cannot be reformed. HB 2 does not have enough teeth to reform it; nor does ODE have the capacity to monitor. "Just say no" to the charter industry.

The political control that the charter industry has over education policy in Ohio

The lack of transparency and accountability in the charter industry is a function of the industry's political power.

The State Board of Education and Ohio Department of Education, in the past, could have reined in many of the abuses in the charter industry, but ODE leaders have said they didn't have the tools to do so. It just seems ODE has decided not to endure the wrath of the politically-powerful charter industry; and the ODE/State Board is controlled by the Governor, an avid charter supporter. HB 2 gives ODE a great number of tools to make charters more transparent and accountable, but many observers don't believe ODE will use those tools effectively.

In recent years, ODE, supported by a majority on the State Board, has been less than transparent and accountable in its own operation. ODE helped cook up the Youngstown Plan in total secrecy. The Plan was concocted with the intent to privatize the Youngstown School District. The \$71 million federal grant received by Ohio (based on bad information) will provide charter start-up money for the privatization of Youngstown and possibly other districts to follow. In a subsequent development, the USDOE, due to revelations regarding ODE's flawed grant application, has put serious restrictions on the execution of the grant funds.

Attempts by some State Board members to have the ODE charter school office undergo an independent investigation have been successfully ditched by the State Superintendent and the State Board President and his majority colleagues. Again, I say the Ohio charter industry is beyond repair.

On October 28, the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) and the Center on Reinventing Public Education (a pro-charter group) issued a report of the National Study of Online Charter Schools. Researchers found that when compared to public school counterparts, e-school students experienced 76 days less learning in reading and 180 days (a whole year) less learning in math. In Ohio, e-school students experienced 72 days less learning in reading and 144 days less in math. Yet, Ohio's Senate President and Speaker of the House made public comments that revealed their doubts about the efficacy of the research findings. The head of the Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools, Darlene Chambers, downplayed the findings, expressing concern about the credibility of the study.

The Ohio charter industry is beyond repair—what can the public common school community do?

So what should our response to all of this be? What specifically must we do? Some specific suggestions follow. But first and foremost, we need to adopt a new mindset. We must stop being apologetic for public education. Public education in Ohio is doing a great job given the net level of public funds made available and the wrongheaded reforms being foisted on it.

We then need to state the obvious—the charter industry is a failed experiment. The charter industry is a parasite on the public common school system. It drains valuable resources from a system that is underfunded and over-mandated. It is time to draw a line in the sand. Enough is enough; therefore we need to take appropriate action.

Use your power to influence and convene. Polls indicate that people trust local school officials and personnel more so than state & federal officials. Improvement in state and federal education policy must start at the local

level. Those who legislate and govern along the Potomac River in D.C. and inside-the-I-270-Beltway in Ohio will not change direction in education policy until local citizens are informed and demand a change.

Concerns and issues to be addressed

Some of the concerns and issues that must be addressed for the public common schools to survive and flourish are:

- The unconstitutional, inadequate and inequitable school funding system coupled with the financial drain to charters and vouchers must be challenged.
- The pro-charter, anti-public school stance of the Ohio Department of Education and the dysfunctional State Board of Education must be addressed.
- The state must assume its constitutional responsibility to secure a thorough and efficient system; but boards of education are responsible to deliver the education programs, curricula and services in the most effective and efficient manner possible. The state, influenced by the federal No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top and by private groups, such as the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), has encroached on local control. Public common school leaders and advocates must demand to be heard in education policy development.
- The state's pro-privatization stance (charters, vouchers, school district takeover) must be challenged.
- The corporatization of the public school system in America, and thus the push to remove elected boards of education must be confronted.
- The inefficiency of the creation of 400 charter entities which are parasitical on school districts must be exposed as another example of bad public policy.
- The bizarre governance structure of the charter industry which invites fraud, corruption and education abuse must be exposed.
- The limitations of the HB 2 charter "reform" bill must be recognized.
- The incapacity of ODE to police the charter industry and the dysfunctional State Board of Education must be revealed.

Specific actions to ensure the survival of the public common school system

Some specific actions that school district officials can and should take in the short range are:

- Boards of education should adopt a series of resolutions to be sent to the media, and state and local officials as follow:
 - Challenge the state's unconstitutional, inadequate, inequitable school funding system.
 - Appeal to the U.S. Department of Education to withdraw the \$71 million grant to expand charter schools in Ohio.
 - Oppose the Youngstown Plan in both the content and ODE's secret development process.
 - Support the wraparound services plan in the original HB 70.
 - Appeal to the State Board of Education, the State Auditor and other state officials to force the Ohio Department of Education to release all records relating to the ODE chartergate.
 - Demand that an independent investigation of ODE's charter school office be conducted.
 - Demand a study of the actual cost of online charter schools.

- Invoice ODE for all funds deducted from the district for charter schools.
- Request that charters follow the same state regulations as districts or that the charter experiment be discontinued.
- Demand that limits be placed on charter marketing costs and prohibit campaign contributions by charter operators.
- Oppose the transfer of local funds to charters.
- Request the law be changed to require that all State Board of Education members be elected. In the long term, work to amend the Ohio Constitution to require all State Board of Education members are elected.

Many boards of education resist the practice of adopting resolutions. But the gravity of these matters should cause boards to “rise above principle” and publicly address them.

- Develop a set of strategies that will convince charter school parents to return their students to the public school district.
- Conduct a series of community meetings regarding charters, school vouchers and other “reform” issues that impede progress in the school district.
- Organize a citizen’s advisory committee in the district to fashion strategies to inform local and state officials regarding the mandates (including charters and vouchers) that impede progress in the district.
- Become politically active regarding public education issues. Fill the Statehouse!
- Consider the question of whether or not the board of education has a fiduciary responsibility to the resident students who attend charter schools, particularly those charters that are lower rated, and to the taxpayers.
- If not a member already, join the Ohio Coalition for Equity & Adequacy of School Funding.
- If in the Appalachian area, also join the Coalition for Rural and Appalachian Schools (CORAS).

Public common school advocates are joining together in various pockets throughout the state to resist mandates that are nonproductive and to oppose the movement to privatize public education. These various “brushfires” need to be brought together to create an inferno that burns up the weeds that reduces the capacity of the common school system to grow to its full potential. That movement must begin now and be sustained in each local school community.

Appendix

Samples of reported irregularities in the charter industry

1. Founder of closed charter schools is accused of robbing near east side home.
2. FBI raids 19 Gulen charter schools, including three in Ohio and the Concept Schools management company.
3. Turkey revokes passport of exiled Muslim cleric, Fethullah Gulen, living in Pennsylvania (Horizon Science Academies and Noble Science Academies are associated with Gulen).
4. Cheating and sex scandals in Gulen charter school exposes Ohio's weak charter school oversight.
5. Concept Schools hired felon, unqualified.
6. Headline: Gulen Movement woos U.S. Congressmen with donations and free trips-*Daily Sabah*.
7. Headline: Exclusive: FBI whistleblower and teacher expose Islamic Gulen Movement infiltrating U.S. through charter schools.
8. Ohio taxpayers provide jobs to Turkish immigrants through charter schools.
9. Search warrant reveals details of FBI raids of Concept Schools.
10. State and local officials treated to free trips to Turkey by Gulen charter school operations.
11. Gulen charter school board members can't or won't verify U.S. citizenship.
12. Imagine schools' Columbus Primary Academy, a charter school of about 150 students, paid \$700,000 in rent for one year to a subsidiary of Imagine Schools.
13. A federal judge in Missouri ordered Imagine Schools...to pay nearly \$1 million for forcing a lucrative lease agreement on a school it operated.
14. Ohio is the Wild, Wild West regarding charter schools.
15. State Auditor: Charter school head count much less than students reported for payment.
16. Yost pushed law to bar felons from charter schools.
17. Robert H. Crosby, Salem, MA, businessman, "Ohio is the profit-making EMO (Education Management Organization) capital of America."
18. National report slams performance of Ohio charter schools.
19. Charter school board: High-priced lease "disservice" to school.
20. State Auditor: Half of all misspent tax dollars statewide were in Ohio charter schools.
21. Headline: Akron schools make private and charter students walk too far, must spend another \$1 million.
22. St. Aloysius Orphanage, which sponsors 53 charter schools, sublets its sponsorship duties to a private company.
23. The cost of administration of charters is twice as high as school districts.
24. White Hat Management claims ownership of the physical assets that were purchased with public money.
25. Buckeye Online School for Success, with approximately 600 students, paid \$185,000 in one year for advertising.
26. Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow (ECOT) spent \$2.7 million on advertising in one year.
27. 92 percent of charter schools received a D or F on the 2014 state report card compared with 64 percent of the traditional urban public schools.
28. \$554 million in charter school property eligible for tax exemption.
29. Ohio Virtual Academy graduation rate is 36.6% in four years.
30. The *Columbus Dispatch* editorial—"Where are the students?"
31. Columbus charter school part of expanded state investigation.
32. Former charter school leader gets plea deal in \$148,000 scam.
33. Choice proponents denounce report that shows students in Ohio learn less at online charter schools.
34. Online charter school evaluation meetings should be open to the public—editorial.
35. Regarding Gulen-operated charter schools—*USA Today* investigation, Turkish Sect Funded Congress Travel.
36. Opinion: Kids need wrap-around services, not charters

37. The Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools wants Ohioans to sign a petition against a ruling by the Supreme Court of Washington that found charter schools unconstitutional.
38. Former charter school leader guilty of theft.
39. Do we need a national moratorium on charter schools?
40. Ohio's charter school disaster: How big profits and pay-to-play operators have derailed reform.
41. The ugly charter school scandal Arne Duncan is leaving behind.
42. Lawmakers question private scoring process for federal charter school grant.
43. Auditor 'shocked' by \$71 million grant for charter schools.
44. Ohio Department of Education is withholding e-school data-rigging documents from Auditor Dave Yost.
45. How much pay do executives at education non-profits receive?
46. Woodridge joins protest against HB 70's Youngstown Plan.
47. August 2015 OSBA Journal: A tale of two cities—public schools and charter schools by Richard Lewis.
48. Where is the sunshine on state school policymaking?
49. A dozen problems with charter schools.
50. Ohio: will chartergate be investigated?
51. Boardman Schools call for greater transparency for charter schools.
52. Ohio's charter school system the butt of ridicule in Washington, D.C.
53. Kasich dismisses call for probe on scrubbing of charter school scores.
54. Audits find misspent funds, problems in two now-closed charter schools.
55. E-schools-Ohio's baddest apples.
56. Ohio-Time to end charter corruption.
57. School districts backing local control bill.
58. Poorly performing charter schools sue Ohio for trying to shut them down.
59. Troubled Ohio charter schools have become a joke—literally.
60. Profiting billions from failing kids: Ohio's charter funding model.
61. Trio found guilty in bribery scheme involving charter school.

Join the Coalition for Equity & Adequacy of School Funding or renew your membership

The Coalition is a leading advocate for the preservation of an adequately funded public common school system and a consummate opponent of the movement to privatize public education. A total of over 800 messages regarding these matters have been emailed to thousands of subscribers in the past 33 months. One or more messages are posted each day.

The Coalition led the fight to preserve the constitutional language of “thorough and efficient system of common schools” in Ohio’s Constitution when the Education, Public Institutions, and Local Government Committee of the Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission threatened to remove it.

Help keep the Coalition’s voice in Ohio’s public education policy arena. The Coalition tells it the way it is.

If you have not paid FY 2016 dues, do so now. If you have never joined, pass a resolution to join.

The membership fee of \$.50 per student (\$.05 per student for ESCs to a maximum of \$1000) has not been increased since the creation of the Coalition in 1991.

For past accomplishments see back side of this sheet.

Past accomplishments

The Ohio Coalition for Equity & Adequacy of School Funding challenged the constitutionality of the school funding and won four Ohio Supreme Court decisions in the DeRolph case. As a result, there are over 1,000 new school buildings in place and more on the way.

Although the Ohio Supreme Court gave up jurisdiction of the case in December 2002, the per pupil level of state funding rose at a very substantial rate from 1991 filing to a few years beyond the last Court decision in DeRolph. Then came the great recession. Recent income tax cuts, increased state priority for charters and vouchers and less emphasis on traditional public schools by the legislature and the current administration necessitate affirmative action from the public common school community. The Coalition is the vehicle that has a capacity to improve the direction of state education policy.

The DeRolph school funding litigation was successful in large part because an overwhelming majority of Ohio's school districts backed the Coalition. Numbers were important then and are still important.

The Coalition has been a strong voice in declaring the efficacy of the traditional public school system and the pitfalls of the failing charter experiment that originated in 1999.

Public school advocates in various parts of the state are coming together to rekindle the zeal for the traditional system. The Coalition has a major stake in these efforts and invites your participation.