



## knowyourcharter.com gets charter boosters bent out of shape

October 1, 2014

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Innovation Ohio and the Ohio Education Association have released a website that gives people, for the very first time, an easy way to comprehensively compare traditional public schools and charter schools: [www.knowyourcharter.com](http://www.knowyourcharter.com).

As the site notes:

The new on-line tool – [www.knowyourcharter.com](http://www.knowyourcharter.com) – 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. Previously, locating this data required visiting multiple sites and extracting the information from numerous and often confusing spreadsheets.

At [www.knowyourcharter.com](http://www.knowyourcharter.com), visitors will be able to compare schools in a particular geographical area across a wide variety of indices, including State Report Card grades, the amount of state money the schools receive, the percentage spent on classroom instruction, and the average number of years of teacher experience.

Check it out.

Predictably, the charter school boosters at the Fordham Foundation **immediately had a fit**. They erroneously complain that the site "selectively" displays information, even though the entire data set from the Ohio Department of Education is a click away on each charter school displayed!

They complain that the site compares districts to charters - yet fail to acknowledge that Ohio law treats each charter school as a district!

Finally, and perhaps most ironically, they complain about the use of the performance index to highlight just how terrible Ohio's charters truly are. What they don't point out is that their very own leader, Chester E. Finn, Jr., considers this measure to be of the utmost important, in a post titled "**Let's hear it for proficiency**". Here's Chester in his own words

All true—but not reason enough to abandon proficiency. Not, at least, so long as it matters greatly in the real world. Do you want the pilot of your plane to be proficient at take-offs and landings or simply to demonstrate improvement in those skills? (Do you want to fly on an airline that uses only “growth measures” when hiring pilots?) How about dining in restaurants that use

only growth measures when selecting chefs? Having your chest cut open by thoracic surgeons who showed “gains” on their surgical boards but didn’t actually “pass” them?

Kids can show plenty of “growth” in school—and yes, we should laud schools that accomplish this—but still not be ready for college because they aren’t actually proficient. This is why absolute levels matter, too, and why schools should be judged in part by how many of the students emerging from them have reached true proficiency or, in today’s parlance, are truly college and career ready.

Obviously, this is a case of charter boosters not liking to have their dirty laundry, or should we say, awful performance, aired so publicly. They’ll even try to tell us, as Michael Petrilli did on twitter "[@MichaelPetrilli: @jointhefutureOH #knowyourhistory Fordham has been fighting for charter accountability for over a decade](#)". For such staunch fighters for quality, they sure haven't had many victories - and it is, at the end of the day, that demonstrates why [www.knowyourcharter.com](http://www.knowyourcharter.com) is so important. Charter school boosters like Fordham have had over a decade to produce results, and they have failed. For them to resort to knee-jerk criticism of others trying to fix the situation they have long supported is an embarrassment.

**Original blog:** <http://www.jointhefuture.org/1447-knowyourcharter-com-gets-charter-boosters-bent-out-of-shape>