

OPINION

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A textbook example of harmony

Gov. Ted Strickland and school superintendents take note. Public schools and charter schools need not be mortal enemies.

The Cleveland schools' successful partnership with the highly touted Entrepreneurship Preparatory School, the district's sole charter school, proves that peace can be far more fruitful for Ohio's youngsters than war among their schools.

Of course, not all charter schools are equal. Some Ohio charter schools have been just as dysfunctional as the worst public schools. The state must do a better job of rooting them out.

But Strickland, who has called for a moratorium on all charter schools, and the public school officials who support his bad idea, should reconsider their reflexive dislike of the movement. Instead, they should embrace the good ones, as the Cleveland Metropolitan School District has done with E Prep.

Urban school districts can learn new tricks from their smaller but feisty and imaginative peers, which have managed to lure thousands of

youngster to their classrooms.

After all, both institutions work with similar students ---usually poor, usually minority, usually struggling --but the most effective charter schools transform their students into diligent, ambitious scholars. Their success should be widely emulated.

The E Prep partnership provides Cleveland parents with another school choice and allows the city district to claim the school's excellent test scores. Meanwhile, the partnership gives John Zitzner, co-founder of E Prep, a slight edge on the fund raising circuit.

With a first-rate school like E Prep in the mix, everyone comes out ahead. That's why Cleveland should extend a hand to other high-caliber charter schools, like Citizens' Academy and Intergenerational School.

Collaboration with these strong schools could show skeptics that the Cleveland schools' first priority is creating a better overall school system, not wasting time bad-mouthing the charter school movement, which is -- and ought to be -- here to stay.