

The Tale of Two School Funding Spigots—One for the System, One for the Individuals

The Ohio Constitution requires the State, by taxation, to secure a thorough and efficient system of common schools (Article VI, section 2). Also, the Ohio Constitution requires the State to provide, by law, for the organization, administration and control of the public school system supported by public funds (Article VI, section 3).

Contrary to the intent and words of the framers of the Ohio Constitution, the legislature has established additional tax-supported arrangements for education—charter schools and vouchers. The constitutionally-required system is regulated and funded as a system for the benefit of all school-aged children. Vouchers and charters, to a great extent, are not regulated and are available only to select students. In these extra-constitutional private education venues, the State provides funds to individuals and essentially says, “You are on your own.” (Charters are regulated somewhat, but the management company or other private individual operators have a free rein in their operations).

In the voucher world, recipients are on their own. The State essentially says, “Here is an arbitrary pot of money for education—good luck.” If every student in Ohio becomes eligible for a voucher, as is the intent of HB290, thousands of private schools will pop-up, most of which will be established to turn a profit and/or promote a particular ideology or world view. The education scene will be in absolute chaos.

A plethora of political, religious, ideological and paramilitary groups will start up private schools. Profiteers will flock to Ohio to set up low quality school programs that are designed for cheap education and huge profits. There will be a school on every street corner and highway intersection; and don't forget about extremist groups that will start “schools” to promote their ideologies.

It's time for all public school advocates to get on board with the constitutional challenge to EdChoice vouchers.