

Handwriting on the Voucher Wall: The Interpretation is Clear—Universal Vouchers are at Hand

The voucher gang has a clear-cut agenda—a voucher for each and every student. That agenda is now incontrovertible—no longer hidden or deniable. HB290, the Universal Voucher bill, has made their intent transparent. An ambitious minority of Ohio citizens are flooding public officials, particularly legislators, with cards, letters, and emails of support for HB290.

An overwhelming majority of citizens are opposed to a universal voucher system, but few are communicating that sentiment to public officials. Some public school officials are sitting on the sidelines, fearing that if they speak up they will lose “their seat at the legislative table.” Really? A seat at the table in the current political environment in Ohio means leftovers, scraps on plates, and crumbs on the floor for public school supporters. Whereas voucher payments have increased substantially, state appropriations for school districts have not kept up with inflation.

Vouchers were expanded exponentially in both dollar amount and eligibility in the state budget adopted June 2021. In less than a year later, expansion in eligibility for vouchers was inserted into legislation in the dark recesses of the Statehouse. Will that zeal for vouchers be lessened by a “seat at the table”?

What part of the handwriting on the wall do some public school personnel and advocates not understand?