

## **Residual budgeting on top of residual budgeting for school districts is atrocious**

Beginning in the mid-1980's the General Assembly established several committees to study school finance. Each committee issued a report. One such committee was established by SB140 of the 118th General Assembly. This committee—Joint Select Committee to Study Ohio's School Foundation Program and the Distribution of State Funds to School Districts—reported its recommendations on January 22, 1991. (Senator Robert Cupp chaired the committee)

The second recommendation of the Cupp committee was that an objective mechanism to determine the cost of a "basic quality education" should be established during the 1992-1993 biennium. In the discussion of the recommendation is stated: "The per pupil funding level is now set during deliberations on the biennial budget and is widely considered to represent a level determined almost solely by monies available after deducting for other educational and non-educational program costs." In other words, the education budget was a residual—what was left over. The legislature through the years has practiced "residual budgeting" for education.

In the early 1990's there were no charter and voucher payments. Now that charters and vouchers are a huge part of the education landscape, it appears that public education will be plagued by another iteration of "residual budgeting". The insane growth of funding for private ventures demonstrates that funds for these private ventures will continue to be a state priority and that public school districts will receive what is left over after the private school ventures are satisfied—another layer of residual budgeting.

The Governor's current State of the State address is revealing. He put emphasis on greatly expanded voucher and charter school funding, without regard to the impact on school districts.

History repeats itself.