

The voucher advocacy continuum: rescue of poor children from low-performing school districts to every student has a right to vouchers

A couple State of Ohio legislators during the 1980's started to talk about vouchers. Governor Voinovich when elected in the early 1990's, being a consummate private school advocate, invited President George H.W. Bush to speak at an education conference in Columbus, Ohio. Bush's message was a voucher for every student. At that time, public sentiment was overwhelming in opposition to the Bush voucher idea (and it still may well be). The Bush message did not resonate with Ohio at that time. The public's view was—public money for public schools.

Voinovich's response to the Bush message was to "study" the matter and thus appointed a "parent choice" committee headed by his good friend and supporter, Akron Industrialist David Brennan. The committee, of course, recommended vouchers. The legislature initiated Ohio's voucher program on a small scale. Cleveland became a target of a strategic goal of getting a foot-in-the-door on vouchers by starting small. It was designated as a pilot project. Over the years, the rhetoric and tactics have changed from the "rescue mission" to the end goal from the beginning—a voucher for every student. The incremental steps strategy has accomplished what could not have been achieved in one fell swoop.

The current General Assembly (135th) is on the cusp of authorizing universal voucherism. Voucher advocates started a movement by deceiving the American people. Upon the eve of accomplishing their goal, they are confessing the deceit they hid from the beginning—a voucher for everyone.