

**Private schools that accept public money should be subject to all the regulations imposed on traditional public schools.**

Private school leaders that believe they are entitled to and accept increasing allocations of public funds without being subject to expanded public transparency and accountability measures are being somewhat naive. Private schools are unique entities that serve a private purpose; historically privates in the U.S. have been privately funded. Compared to public school districts, private schools are largely unregulated regarding functions and programs that define the mission of the private school. Private funding reduces public regulations.

The 1947 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Everson* allowing public funds to provide for pupil transportation to parochial schools was the beginning of a trajectory of public funding of private schools. The requirement that school districts in Ohio provide transportation to non-public schools began in the late 1960's (Fair Bus Bill).

For several decades the Ohio private school lobby has been successful in securing public money for administrative cost reimbursement (\$71,647,683 in FY2023), auxiliary services (\$158,591,274 in FY2023), and pupil transportation (unknown cost borne by school districts). The general public is generally unaware of the amount of these public expenditures. In recent years the public expenditures for school vouchers have become more pronounced and visible as the voucher scheme has evolved from a pilot project in Cleveland to a statewide program involving hundreds of millions. This voucher deal will likely soon be universal in student eligibility.

As the public becomes aware of the enormous expansion of public funding flowing to private schools via vouchers, the demand for expanded public oversight of the privates will emerge in the Statehouse. The public will demand transparency and accountability in exchange for public funding.

A universal voucher system will spawn a multitude of fly-by-night start-up privates that will taint the image of traditional privates and thus hasten penetrating regulations of privates.

The privates in turn will lessen their identity and distinctiveness and become much like public schools.