

The universal EdChoice voucher scheme hurts taxpayers, school children, school communities and school districts.

The Ohio legislature in 1819 appointed the Common School Commission to study how schools supported by taxes should be set-up. That Commission could have recommended a plethora of institutional structures for the provision of education in Ohio. At that time, there were numerous chartered groups offering education programs.

Within five years after the appointment of the Common School Commission, the legislature had established the framework for the common school system. That framework included:

1. School districts
2. Tax support
3. Governance by elected persons
4. Open to all students at no cost to parents

The revised Constitution adopted by Ohioans in 1851 requires the state to secure (i.e.) to protect and provide for a thorough and efficient system of common schools, and that no religious sect or sects would be permitted to control any part of the school funds (Article VI, section 2). Hence, every school-age child was, and still is, entitled to high-quality educational opportunities, regardless of where they live and who they are. For over 150 years, Ohio government enacted policies that incrementally improved education opportunities over time. The 1912 and 1953 constitutional amendments expressed citizens' appetite for improvements beyond those made available by state officials.

But then state officials, beginning in the 1970's and 1980's, took a wrong turn regarding education. They took their eyes off what the Ohio Constitution demanded—one thorough and efficient common school system and began to flitter away education funding to direct payments to private schools, charter schools, and vouchers.

Accountability and transparency has always been a hallmark of the common school system. However, the hallmark of the private alternatives is non-transparency and unaccountability, which hurts school children, school communities, and school districts. Every dime spent by public school districts must be accounted for. Tax funds sent to private schools via vouchers have no strings attached; hence, EdChoice vouchers hurt everyone concerned.