

Jeanne Melvin, President of Public Education Partners devastates arguments in favor of the state takeover of State Board of Education functions.

Jeanne Melvin gave permission to use the article. It was published by the [Columbus Dispatch](#) on October 22. In the article, Ms. Melvin correctly points out that governors and legislators are subject to control by lobbyists who have much to gain by their influence peddling. She also indicates that the transfer is unconstitutional.

The legislature by statute has overturned a decision by the citizens of Ohio. But even if the transfer would be constitutional it is a tragic mistake to allow the office of governor to take over the functions of the State Board of Education. The reason the people of Ohio passed the 1953 constitutional amendment to transfer the State Education Agency to the newly created State Board of Education was because the governor's office was not capable of handling education matters.

The state's attempt to takeover local school districts has ended in chaos. Education should be left to non-partisan boards of education at both the state and local levels.

In the Sunday Dispatch, retired teacher Mary Spicer wrote about the takeover of the Ohio Department of Education (ODE): "In order to bring common sense into curriculum decisions, the governor had little choice other than gaining control of the whole education system."

I too am a retired educator, and I have 40 years of teaching experience that has broadened my perspective. I am well-acquainted with the school-privatization network that brings adverse changes to our public-school districts to profit at the expense of children and families.

Political pressure and partisan ideology should never be allowed to influence education policy-making. That's the reason Ohioans voted to remove ODE from the Governor's office in the first place, making the State Board of Education a fourth branch of government.

Last year, Ohioans elected new State School Board members who had campaigned on dedicating the Board to educational policy pursuits, rather than current culture war issues. Soon after that election, [a bill was introduced to take over ODE and the State Board of Education](#), thereby nullifying thousands of votes.

This [state takeover bill was unconstitutionally included in the biennial budget](#), and Gov. Mike DeWine and the General Assembly stripped the State School Board, ODE, and the Superintendent of Education of their core powers, which are slated to be transferred to a new Department of Education and Workforce under the control of DeWine's political appointees.

I agree with Spicer's assertion that education decisions are often controlled by lobbyists who have much to gain financially by petitioning legislators to enact laws favorable to their interests.

Unfortunately, it's not only our legislators who are under the control of these influence peddlers.

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We must speak up and reject Gov. Mike DeWine's unconstitutional takeover of the State School Board and the Ohio Department of Education!

Jeanne Melvin, Public Education Partners

<https://www.dispatch.com/story/opinion/letters/2023/10/22/ohio-issue-1-abortion-amendment-woman-made-hard-choices-after-cysts-found-on-my-babys-brain/71227693007/>