The Senate President in his de facto role as chief enabler of the EdChoice voucher scheme has announced his intention to secure tax funds for private school facilities.

The Senate President's public pronouncement about the quest for tax funds for private school facilities is an appropriate time to provide information about Ohio's progress in assisting school districts in building facilities.

The Classroom Facilities Assistance program was established in 1997 in response to the Ohio Supreme Court decision in the DeRolph school funding case. The timing of local school district participation in the program is based on the district adjusted valuation per pupil (VPP).

Each year, the Department of Education ranks the districts according to adjusted valuation per pupil (VPP). The highest VPP district is last on the priority list.

According to the most recent Classroom Facilities Assistance Program status report, 304 districts have completed their District Master Facilities Plan; hence more than 300 districts are in various phases of facilities development. Some districts have partially completed their Master Facilities Plan; other districts have declined the offer of state assistance; still others have not been able to raise their local share. 93 DISTRICTS HAVE NOT YET BEEN REACHED WITH AN OFFER OF STATE ASSISTANCE. It therefore is apparent that there is a substantial need for additional state facilities funds for the state's common school system.

Private schools have no property tax base; thus, they would not be a fit for the Classroom Facilities Assistance program unless a set aside would be instigated with no local share required; otherwise, general revenue funds would have to be tapped. Either way, it would be a travesty for Ohio taxpayers to foot the bill for private schools; particularly since a substantial number of public school districts have not been accommodated.

Annual Reports: https://ofcc.ohio.gov/about-ofcc/annual-reports

Status Report: https://ofcc.ohio.gov/our-programs/k-12-schools/programs/classroom-facilities-assistence-program-cfap