

FORMER LEGISLATOR STEVE DYER: SMALLEST SHARE OF STATE'S BUDGET ALLOTTED TO EDUCATE PUBLIC SCHOOL KIDS IN THE LAST 50 YEARS.

Steve Dyer's May 28th [10th Period](#) provides shocking data about the state budget's low priority for educating public school district students --lowest in 50 years.

50 years ago, high expenditure programs such as special education, career technical programs, English learners, and disadvantaged pupil programs were in the infant stage. Notwithstanding the near-full implementation of these programs at the present time, the state is now allocating a dramatically lower percentage of the state budget to public school district students as indicated in Steve Dyer's May 28, 2024, [10th Period](#).

[It's Official: Ohio Leaders Hosing Public School Kids Today Worse Than Ever](#)

Since 1975, the percentage of the state budget going to Ohio's public school students has dropped from 40% to barely 20% this year -- a record low.

[STEPHEN DYER](#)

MAY 28

This is stunning, stunning data. But the Ohio General Assembly and Gov. Mike DeWine today are committing the smallest share of the state's budget to educate Ohio's public school kids in the last 50 years. And it's not really close.

[view graph online]

What's going on here?

Simple: Ohio's leaders have spent the last 3+ decades investing more and more money into privately run charter schools and, especially recently, have exploded their commitment to subsidize wealthy Ohioans' private school tuitions. This has come at the expense of the 85% of Ohio students who attend the state's public school districts.

Look at this school year, for example. In the [budget](#), the state commits a little more than \$11 billion to primary and secondary education. That represents 26.6% of the state's \$41.5 billion annual expenditure. However, this year, charter schools are expected to be paid \$1.3 billion and private school tuition subsidies will soar to \$1.02 billion (to give you an idea of what kind of explosion this has been, when I left the Ohio House in 2010, Ohio spent about \$75 million on these tuition subsidies). So if you subtract that combined \$2.32 billion that's no longer going to kids in public school districts, now Ohio's committing \$8.7 billion to educate the 1.6 million kids in Ohio's public school districts. That's a 21.1% commitment of the state's budget.

Some perspective:

- That \$8.7 billion is about what the state was sending to kids in public school districts in 1997, adjusted for inflation.

- The 21.1% commitment currently being sent to kids in public school districts is by far the lowest commitment the state has ever made to its public school students — about 7% lower than the previous record (last year's 22.2%) and 20% lower than the previous record for low spending in the pre-privatization era.
- The voucher expenditure alone now drops state commitment to public school kids by nearly 10%.
- The commitment to all students, including vouchers and charters, represents the fifth-lowest commitment since 1975. Only four years surrounding the initial filing of the state's school funding lawsuit in 1991 were lower. The lowest commitment ever on record was 1992 at 25.2% of the state budget. Don't worry, though. Next year, the projected commitment to all Ohio students will be 25.3% of the state budget.
- What is clear now is that every single new dollar (plus a few more) that's been spent on K-12 education since 1997 has gone to fund privately run charter schools and subsidize private school tuitions mostly for parents whose kids already attend private school.

What's even more amazing is that even if charters and vouchers never existed and all that revenue was going to fund the educations of only Ohio's public school students, the state is still spending a smaller percentage of its budget on K-12 education than at any but 4 out of the last 50 years. And next year it's less than all but 1 of those last 50 years.

Ohio's current leaders have essentially divested from Ohio's greatest resource — its children and future — for the last 30 years.

But wait. It gets worse. Because when those kids decide to attend college, the state is forcing parents to pay more than ever.

In 1975, the state committed 10.5% of its total budget to the primary funding source for Ohio's public colleges and universities — its State Share of Instruction. Wanna guess what next year's commitment will be? If you guessed 4.7%, you're a winner.

That's right, at a time when the state's committing among the lowest share of its budget to educate Ohio's public school students in 50 years, it's committing 55% less to educate Ohio's public college and university students than it did 50 years ago — the lowest commitment on record.

So remember every time you look at your property tax bill going up, your in-state tuition climbing through the roof, and your kids' or your own student loans exploding where the blame *really* lies.

It's in Columbus.

In a majestic building on Capitol Square.

For it is the people who work there who want you to pay more for your kids to get a fair shake in this economy and world than any Ohioan ever has.

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It's not an accident. They meant for this to happen. It's their fault.

It all starts there.

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