

**30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the trial court decision in the DeRolph School Funding case—July 1, 2024—  
Part 4.**

The first three segments of the narrative of the DeRolph School Funding litigation focused on the actions and events that led up to the filing of the lawsuit.

On February 11th, 1991, CORAS hosted a statewide meeting of school district officials to gauge interest in filing a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the state's school funding system. Subsequent to the meeting, CORAS leaders, on February 20, 1991, formed the Ohio Coalition for Equity and Adequacy of School Funding. In May 1991, the Coalition filed the Thompson case which included some federal claims, as well as the state claims. The state was successful in moving the case into federal court. The Coalition was not successful in having it remanded back to state court; thus, a new case—DeRolph—was filed in December 1991. Some school districts, as well as some statewide school management organizations, did not associate with the DeRolph school finance litigation. In fact, a group of mostly affluent districts formed the Alliance for Adequate School Funding to essentially protect their advantaged overall financial status among Ohio school districts. It was common to hear leaders of this group suggest that the litigation would result in a Robin Hood effect. The Alliance attempted to intervene in the DeRolph case at several junctures as the case moved through the court system, but the court rejected each attempt.

Prior to the filing of the DeRolph School Funding case in Perry County Court of Common Pleas, Cleveland School officials filed a class action school funding case in Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas. Most Ohio school districts had no desire to be a part of the “Cleveland Class”; hence on behalf of all districts, the Coalition attempted to extricate districts from the Cleveland Case (Howard). Some Cleveland School District officials had participated in discussions with the Coalition leaders but decided to pre-empt Coalition by filing the specific Cleveland Class action suit.

Part 5 of this series will focus on the trial preparation and the efforts of Coalition leadership to call public attention to the sad state of school facilities and the primary flaws in the state's school funding system.