

Steve Dyer's July 1, 10th Period—Vouchers, like their advocates, move to the 'burbs.

Steve Dyer concludes his [July 10th Period](#): “This voucher thing has never been about the kids. It’s always ever been — and always will be — about the adults who want you to subsidize their private school tuition bill.”

Dyer’s analysis shows that vouchers in the suburbs (using the state’s two suburban classifications) leaped from 11,000 to over 54,000. These suburban districts are the two highest performing school district types in the state.

What happened to the “rescue the poor kids” talking point of voucher zealots? This voucher movement was never and never will be about poor kids.

Where is the outrage?

Steve writes:

Vouchers, like their Advocates, Move to the 'Burbs

More Ohio vouchers now subsidize suburban parents' private school tuitions than urban parents'. Ohio's voucher program explodes in Ohio's wealthiest and highest performing school districts

[STEPHEN DYER](#)

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Whenever I think about Ohio’s EdChoice Voucher Program, I keep coming back to Chief Justice William Rehnquist’s majority opinion in 2002 that found Cleveland’s voucher program — EdChoice’s predecessor — [constitutional](#):

“Any objective observer familiar with the full history and context of the Ohio program would reasonably view it as one aspect of a broader undertaking to assist poor children in failed schools ... [t]he program here in fact creates financial disincentives for religious schools, with private, religious schools receiving only half the government assistance given to community schools and one-third the assistance given to magnet schools.”

We’ve gone over [again](#) and [again](#) how expensive Ohio’s now \$1 billion voucher program has become and now there is an actual financial *incentive* for private schools to take vouchers (as demonstrated by the fact that 1112 private schools take them today vs. 588 taking them 10 years ago).

But now we have evidence that absolutely destroys any semblance of the originally stated intent of the voucher program. Because today, more vouchers are being used to subsidize suburban parents’ private school tuitions than urban parents’.

District categorization, or typology, is set by the State’s education [department](#). So it’s not me categorizing these districts as urban or suburban; it’s the state.

And as you can see, **Ohio’s suburban districts now lose more students to EdChoice vouchers than Ohio’s urban school districts.** (Just for reference, Major Urban districts are these 8 districts — Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland, Dayton, Toledo and Youngstown; Urban districts are places like Warren and Mansfield; Suburban districts are places like Sylvania, Tallmadge or North Olmsted; and Wealthy Suburban districts are places like Mason, Upper Arlington and Hudson)

[Read online to view the data](#)

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What you can see is that while the voucher explosion is pronounced everywhere, it is absolutely skyrocketing in the 'burbs, jumping from a little less than 11,000 vouchers to 54,515 — about 6% more EdChoice vouchers than urban districts lose.

More telling still is that the two suburban district categories that are seeing the most explosive growth are the two highest performing school district types in the entire state.

Ohio has something called the Performance Index Score, which is the closest thing to a single, test-score related measure of student success (I won't get into the calculation, which is on a 108.8 scale. Don't ask.). It's incredibly flawed as a [measure](#) because it, like nearly all standardized test-based student success models, measures wealth, not success. But it is what it is.

The district types that score the highest on this score are wealthier suburban districts — most scoring around 85-90% of the top possible score. The lowest performing districts are substantially poorer urban districts, whose average scores are just over 50-60% of the top score.

So now that the highest performing, wealthiest districts in the state are losing the most voucher students, how can advocates argue with any sort of credibility that this program is about “a broader undertaking to assist poor children in failed schools,” as Rehnquist claimed?

Is it coincidence that the strongest voucher advocates live in suburbs? Wanna bet how many now get vouchers to send their kids to private, religious schools using your hard-earned tax dollars?

This voucher thing has never been about the kids.

It's always ever been — and always will be — about the adults who want you to subsidize their private school tuition bill.

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