

Fiduciary responsibility of public school board members does not include protecting the interests of private schools.

Some super wealthy private voucher supporting organizations have minions in Ohio that are lobbying school board members to bolster-up tax-supported alternatives to the public common school system required by the Ohio Constitution. In some cases, these voucher supporting groups identify voucher supporters to run for seats on the board of education and provide tons of funds to get them elected.

Public school board members need to understand that they have a fiduciary responsibility for the public school district they serve—not for the private schools. This fiduciary responsibility involves providing for the good of the school district, taking into consideration first the students and parents, and then the taxpayers. If a parent opts to send their students to a private voucher school or charter school, the public school board members' fiduciary responsibility ends for these students, unless they return to the school district classrooms. The school board members are stewards of public trust and must act for the good of the district and not for their own private interests or the interests of private schools. Public school board members constitute the board for the public schools—not the private schools.

Public school boards must exercise due diligence and oversight to ensure that its financial situation remains sound. Board members in Ohio should be alarmed that on the average, a school district high school student generates, on the state average, less than \$5000 per pupil in state funding for Ohio school districts; whereas a high school student enrolled in a private school generates about twice as much in state funding for private schools. Should that funding disparity alarm public school board members? Should the board members take action necessary to challenge that state policy?

The state legislature underfunded the school district funding formula by about \$750 million this year, while allocating the same amount for additional EdChoice vouchers.

In some cases, public school board members are involved in the operation of private schools and thus have a conflict of interest when voting against a resolution to challenge the use of public funds allocated to private schools via vouchers.