

August 25 LTE by Mike Halaiko: No new school levies unless voucher lawsuit joined.

Pickerington resident, Mike Halaiko raises an interesting point that a growing number of Ohioans are pondering—do school officials have a responsibility to protect property taxpayers from levies required by the state's failure to secure a thorough and efficient system?

As state officials continue to escalate the drain of public school district money into the voucher scheme, local school officials will want to consider the amount of state funding lost to the district due to EdChoice vouchers. Obviously, lower levels of state funds received will affect the frequency and rate of millage needed to replace lost state funds, thus putting a greater burden on property taxes.

A future school levy campaign slogan might be "The additional millage is necessary to subsidize your neighbor's private school tuition—vote yes!".

School treasurers may wish to calculate the amount of additional funds their district would be receiving if the Cupp/Patterson Fair School Funding Plan had been fully funded from the time it was enacted. That amount then could be compared to the number of mills needed to replace the loss of state revenue.

The additional state funding required to implement the universal voucher scheme is about the same as the shortfall needed to fully fund Cupp/Patterson.

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In school year 2023-24, members of our super majority Ohio Legislature approved over \$900 million of public tax dollars to be awarded as vouchers for private school entities without any accountability on the part of private schools.

My question is this: Where is the outrage from every public-school board, superintendent and treasurer in the state of Ohio concerning this irresponsible and unconstitutional violation?

Proponents of this illegal legislative action falsely claim that vouchers are assisting the poor and disenfranchised to have the opportunity to attend private schools, but the statistics prove otherwise. The majority of the voucher giveaway dollars are being used by persons who have never attended a public school and can afford to send their children to private schools.

Citizens have every right to send their children to private schools, but not with tax dollars mandated for public schools.

The student population in many public schools in Ohio is growing exponentially. How can those districts that have not joined the Vouchers Hurt Ohio Lawsuit, inevitably, ask for additional levy money, when they have sat silently and not demanded that the Ohio legislature stop this free, unaccountable, public tax dollar giveaway?

Mike Halaiko, Pickerington