

**Steve Dyer: Private school parents hurt their kids by taking free government money.**

Former Ohio legislator, attorney Steve Dyer, in his March 17 [10<sup>th</sup> Period](#), shows, via Ohio Department of Education data, how voucher students are harmed academically. This should be alarming to parents of voucher students.

Legislators who do the bidding of voucher advocates should be alarmed, conscience-stricken, and ashamed. But they are not! These state officials seem to want to support the private school industry in spite of the damage vouchers do to voucher students.

**Private School Parents Hurt Their Kids by Taking Free Government Money**

State Data: The longer a private school parent takes tuition subsidies, the worse their students do academically

[Stephen Dyer](#)

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About three years ago, I wrote about the interesting phenomenon that the longer an Ohio kid takes a voucher, the worse they do on state [tests](#).

As I started looking at this year's most recent education data, I decided to examine this again. What I found left me simply gob smacked. That's because the situation today is far, far worse than it was when I last looked at it.

How much worse?

How about this:

On all proficiency [tests](#), students getting a voucher for one year or less overall<sup>1</sup> are about 75% proficient. Three years later, they're 54% proficient.

***That's a drop of nearly 1/3!***

What's that like in comparison with school districts? That 75% proficiency rate is about what public school students in suburban Cloverleaf Local Schools in Medina County [receives](#). The 54% proficiency rate is about what public school students in Appalachian New Boston Local in Scioto County receive. A reminder that the number one determinant of test score success is the income level of the test [taker](#).

Just for [reference](#), about 40% of Cloverleaf's students are economically disadvantaged and their community's median income is \$76,271. New Boston is 99.997% economically disadvantaged and their median income is \$39,525.

So at the end of three years, voucher students' performance drops from that of a typical upper middle class suburban student to that of a typical poor, Appalachian student. Put another way, the voucher students' first-year scores would rank in the top 1/4 of all Ohio Public School Districts; their third-year scores would rank in the bottom 1/5 of all Ohio Public School Districts.

Not great.

It's even worse if you dig into the individual scores. For example, high school voucher recipients drop 41% in math and 31% in reading<sup>2</sup>.

(Read [online](#) to view graph)

Voucher students in K-8 grades drop 21% in reading and 31% each in math and science.

(Read [online](#) to view graph)

**Importantly, there is no subject in which voucher students are tested where they *improve* their proficiency over 3 years.**

Again. Not great.

I'm frankly stunned these data haven't slowed the state's continued shoveling of money to private school parents in order to subsidize their private school tuition. Instead, Gov. Mike DeWine's budget provides a 17% increase in voucher [funding](#). And a \$100 million cut to public school students.

Again I ask: Why do these guys so prefer private school parents over public school students

And I've got an even tougher question:

What about these parents taking vouchers? Are they really trying to give their kids a better opportunity? Or are they just seeking a government handout?

Because it sure doesn't seem to be academic quality that's driving their decision here.

1

I combined all test takers and passers (K-8 testers and high school testers in all subjects) together — like how the state does it for the performance index score. Test takers in math are far less proficient than reading or social studies. But overall, I wanted to reduce it to a number.

2

Again, percent drop, not percentage point drop.