

March 21 Cleveland Plain Dealer editorial raises critical concerns about Ohio's run amuck voucher scheme.

The editorial raises whether Ohioans agree with spending a billion tax dollars on private school vouchers and whether top income families should be receiving public tax dollars.

The fast-escalating push by the Ohio General Assembly to authorize taxpayer dollars for private and parochial school vouchers hit nearly \$1 billion last school year and is [projected to rise to \\$1.06 billion this school year](#), cleveland.com's Laura Hancock recently reported.

This is happening through an expanded EdChoice school voucher program that makes voucher subsidies available to every Ohio family, no matter how wealthy.

Through a sliding scale, the very wealthiest Ohio families -- families of four making \$234,001 or more -- can get annual vouchers worth \$950 per child for private or parochial school educations and \$650 per child for kindergarten through 8th grade.

Hancock previously found, based on enrollment data, that many families that took advantage of the expanded EdChoice voucher program [likely already had kids in private or parochial schools](#).

A more recent state analysis revealed that families at the very top of incomes in Ohio -- those making six- and seven-figure salaries -- [accounted for 19% of all EdChoice voucher spending in the 2023-2024 school year](#).

Could all this be considered more a public subsidy of these families' private and parochial schooling of their kids, rather than a school choice program?

The editorial rightly cites Article VI, section 2 of the Ohio Constitution questioning the constitutionality of spending tax funds on vouchers.

It also could be argued that the use of public money to support parochial education runs contrary to the Ohio Constitution in [Article VI, Section 2 on school funding](#). It directs: "The General Assembly shall make such provisions, by taxation, or otherwise, as, with the income arising from the school trust fund, will secure a thorough and efficient system of common schools throughout the state; but no religious or other sect, or sects, shall ever have any exclusive right to, or control of, any part of the school funds of this state."

Consider how quickly the legislature has bulked up voucher spending under the EdChoice-Expansion program — without asking the people.

Annual spending rose 63% from \$595 million the expansion's first year to a whopping \$970.7 million last school year, after lawmakers made virtually every family eligible for the vouchers. The projected \$1.06 billion for this school year would be another 9% increase on top of that.

Yet the percentage of Ohio children attending private and parochial schools is low compared with the 88% in public schools, including charter public schools, as of the 2023-24 school year, per [data from the Thomas B. Fordham Institute](#) — which counts home-schooled students in its overall numbers.

The current and immediate past legislatures elected from gross gerrymandered legislative districts are out of sync with a majority of Ohio citizens regarding the voucher scheme.