

Laura Hancock, Cleveland.com: New funding for public schools the smallest increase in decade—Look up your district.

Hancock's July 8 [article](#) highlights the fact that the Ohio budget for fiscal years 2026 and 2027 grossly shortchanges the constitutionally required public common school system while heaping public tax dollars on the EdChoice voucher scheme.

EdChoice vouchers were found unconstitutional by Franklin County Common Pleas Court Judge Jaiza Page! Voucher advocacy legislators are violating their oath of office in transgressing the plain language of Article VI, section 2 of the Ohio Constitution. They are shortchanging the constitutionally required common school system and illegally throwing billions of taxpayer dollars at vouchers.

New funding for public schools the smallest increase in decade -- Look up your district.

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By

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COLUMBUS, Ohio -The recently signed state budget bill provides the smallest funding increase for public schools in a decade, with investments in the much smaller private school voucher programs rivaling the public school totals.

In the next school year, traditional public schools, which educate [about 80% of Ohio's 1.8 million students](#), will get \$128.7 million above 2024-2025 school year levels of nearly \$8.4 billion -- an increase of about 1.5% in state funding. In the 2026-2027 school year, they will receive another \$120.9 million above that.

The legislature is providing private school voucher programs \$101.5 million next school year above 2024-2025's nearly \$1 billion -- an increase of 9.4% The following year, vouchers will get another \$124.1 million. About 154,000 students participate in one of the state's five voucher programs -- [two of which a Franklin County judge recently ruled were unconstitutional](#).

The contrast reflects the legislature's priorities of school choice, as well as its near abandonment of a six-year, bipartisan plan to boost funding to less wealthy school districts.

Charter schools will receive \$61.2 million over last year's \$1.3 billion, an increase of 4.8%. They will receive \$67.3 million more for the 2026-2027 school year. About 117,000 students attend charter schools.

The additional money going to charter schools and voucher programs reflects increased projected enrollment over the next two school years.

Below are the amounts the budget provides to each K-12 public school district. Note that these aren't the only funds the schools receive. They also raise money through local property taxes and [receive federal funds](#).

FY 2026-27 district funding

[View [online](#) to] See the amount each school district will receive from the budget

Throughout the budget-making process, public school advocates kept their eyes on the Fair School Funding Plan and property taxes.

The Fair School Funding Plan is a bipartisan funding structure designed to inject over six years roughly \$2 billion into public schools above 2018 funding levels of \$6.9 billion. The next two school years are the fifth and sixth years.

The plan was designed to address [a series of Ohio Supreme Court rulings](#) in the early 2000s that found funding was unconstitutionally uneven between wealthier districts that could raise a lot of money through property taxes and “poorer” districts that could not.

The budget that Gov. Mike DeWine signed late Monday night does follow the formula for the Fair School Funding Plan, although many of the costs – from employee salaries to insurance – are based on 2022 figures, which are lower than today’s inflation-elevated figures.

Furthermore, the legislature added three supplemental funds outside the Fair School Funding Plan that reward high-performing school districts, fast-growing school districts and a general base cost per pupil addition.

Advocates argue that these supplementals dilute the plan. The All In for Ohio Kids coalition labeled the funding a “cheap knockoff of the Fair School Funding Plan.”

In Northeast Ohio, the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, which received \$307 million in state aid in the 2024-2025 school year, will receive \$2.6 million less next school year. The following school year, it will receive \$2.2 million less than 2024-2025 levels.

Fast-growing school districts fare better, as do high-performing districts.

Solon City School District received a 5 out of 5 stars on Ohio’s State Report Cards in September. It will receive \$616,000 more next school year over the \$4.9 million it received 2024-2025. It will receive \$6 million in 2026-2027.

The district’s enrollment has remained steady at around 4,600 students in the past five years.

Licking Heights Local School District, outside Columbus, is among the state’s faster-growing districts, gaining 500 more students to just over 5,000 in the past five years. It received 4.5 stars on September’s report card.

Having received \$26.3 million last school year, Licking Heights Local will receive \$3 million more a year in the next two years.

The budget is the last that term-limited Gov. Mike DeWine signed.

“Underfunded public schools and [the elimination of an elected State Board of Education](#) will be Gov. DeWine’s education legacy,” said Melissa Cropper, president of the Ohio Federation of Teachers.

Public school advocates are watching the legislature [for veto overrides](#).

DeWine vetoed several [measures that would reduce property taxes](#) to schools, including tax discounts to homeowners if the local district “carried over” more than 40% of its operating expenses to the next year.

“Although the House and Senate majorities ignored the will of the people by pushing through a knockoff version of the Fair School Funding Plan, handing out [\\$1 billion tax breaks](#) for the wealthiest people in our state, and silencing Ohioans’ voices by [removing elected seats](#) from the State Teachers Retirement System board and the State Board of Education, Gov. DeWine showed courage and wisdom in a number of his veto decisions,” said Scott DiMauro, president of the Ohio Education Association.

Paul Imhoff, director of government relations for the Buckeye Association of School Administrators, said that “schools recognize the need for property tax reform and are ready to provide responsible solutions that are in the best in interest of property owners and students.”