

In his November 13, 10th Period, Steve Dyer highlights the myths the Buckeye Institute set forward in the Columbus Dispatch column.

The Buckeye Institute is bankrolled by the big money boys that typically are hostile to the public common schools. In its role of being a mouthpiece for their funders, the Buckeye Institute folks habitually spew myths and deceptions (lies) about the public common schools.

In his November 13, 10th Period, attorney Dyer completely debunks the Buckeye Institute's column.

School Privatizers Cost Public School Kids \$1.6 billion, or a fully funded public school system

Buckeye Institute once again misleads in Dispatch op-ed. They really think you're stupid.

[Stephen Dyer](#)

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Look, I like Greg Lawson as a guy. We've been on panels together and fought over things on the radio and in other places.

But man, he really, *really* thinks y'all are stupid.

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In an op-ed he had published in the Columbus Dispatch [yesterday](#) where he argued that public school districts whine too much about money, he made the following claim:

"State K-12 spending in 2023 was 39.5% higher than in 2010 — and school spending in 2024 and 2025 shows no sign of cooling off: "State funding for primary and secondary education totaled \$11.64 billion in FY 23; was \$13 billion in FY 24 (a \$1.36 billion or 11.7% increase); and is estimated at \$13.42 billion in FY 25, the second year of the state budget (a \$415.8 million or 3.2% increase)."

See, Greg wants you to conclude something from these numbers: that public school districts are swimming in money and their griping over vouchers and his budget-sucking agenda is bullshit. It's those greedy bastards in your local school districts that are causing your property taxes to skyrocket.

What he leaves out is that the numbers he's using to make the districts-swimming-in-money claim ***include money for charter schools and vouchers***.

That's right.

He's writing an entire article complaining that school districts whine too much about vouchers taking away money from public school kids by citing K-12 expenditure data that ... ***includes money going to vouchers and charter schools***.

Can't make it up.

I'll break down his ridiculous claim in two parts.

Part I — Overall K-12 Funding

First, let's look at the overall claim — massive increases to K-12 spending. Forget about the fact that the voucher and charter money need to be deducted out of that number.

Let's just look at Greg's topline claim — the state's spending tons more now than 15 years ago on K-12 education, so quit whining!

Yes. Spending is up. But you know what else is up?

Inflation.

See, in the 2009-2010 school [year](#), the state spent a total of \$7.9 billion on K-12 education. In the 2024-2025 school year, that number was \$11.5 billion.

Big jump, right?

Well, if you adjust for 2025 [dollars](#), that \$7.9 billion spent on K-12 education in 2009-2010 is the equivalent of \$11.9 billion, or about \$400 million **more** than what the state spent on K-12 education last school year.

Let me repeat that.

The state is spending the equivalent of \$400 million **less** on K-12 education than they did 15 years ago, adjusted for inflation.

Funny Greg didn't mention that.

Part II — Privatizers Force Property Tax Increases

Now let's look at charters and vouchers. Let's just set aside how poorly charters prepare [kids](#), or how the EdChoice program is an unconstitutional [scheme](#) that provides not a single dollar to a parent or [child](#) and voucher test scores aren't great [either](#), compared with school district counterparts.

Let's just look at the money.

In the 2009-2010 school year, Ohio sent \$768 million to charter schools and vouchers.

Last school year, that number was \$2.3 billion.

[Read online to view the charts]

For those of you scoring at home, that's a more than 100% increase in funding for these privatization efforts ... **above inflation!**

So while in 2009-2010 the state spent about same percentage of their K-12 spend on the percentage of kids who attended public schools at the time, last year the state spent 77% of their K-12 spend on the 84% of kids who attended public schools.

[Read online to view the charts]

This cut in the share of state funding going to public school students can be directly tied to the state more than doubling the inflationary increase on charter schools and vouchers over the last 15 years.

Bottom line: What has this meant in funding for Ohio's public school kids?

Well, in 2009-2010, the state, after deducting charter school and voucher funding, provided \$7.1 billion for Ohio's public school students.

Adjusted for [inflation](#), that's \$10.7 billion in today's dollars.

(I would also like to add that the 2009-2010 school year was the first year of the Evidence Based model of school funding that I shaped as the Chairman of the Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee on the Ohio House Finance Committee. We pulled off this investment — greater than last school year's investment, adjusted for inflation — in the middle of the Great Recession. So it's not like we had shit tons of money lying around the way lawmakers do now. Which should tell you about the priorities back then vs. today.)

I digress.

Last school year, Ohio's public school students received \$9.1 billion.

That means that Ohio's public school students are receiving \$1.6 billion less, adjusted for inflation, than they did 15 years ago.

Should I mention here that not a single penny of the more than \$1 billion going to vouchers is publicly audited to ensure the money goes to educate kids rather than Lambos for Administrators?

Anyway.

Put another way: If Ohio lawmakers and governors had simply kept the same commitment to charter schools and vouchers that they did 15 years ago and kept pace with inflation on their K-12 spend, Ohio's public school students would have received \$1.6 billion more last year than they actually did.

In other words, we'd have a fully funded Fair School Funding [Plan](#).

I'm not asking the legislature or Governor to do anything crazy here. No elimination of vouchers and charters.

This is simply doing inflationary increases and making sure the percentage of state funding going to each sector (public, charter and voucher) matched the percentage of kids attending each sector.

Yes, ladies and gentlemen, if the state had *actually* let "money follow the child", Ohio's public school students would have a fully funded Fair School Funding Plan and there would **still have a \$1.2 billion charter and voucher program!**

Instead, state leaders have so *overvalued* private school vouchers and charter schools that now we have an unconstitutional EdChoice voucher program that doesn't send a single dollar to a parent or student, charter schools that spend about double the amount per pupil on administration that public schools spend while tragically failing to graduate students, and a school funding formula that's severely underfunded for the 84% of students who attend public school districts.

While Greg might tell school districts, "Quit your bitching!", I might humbly suggest that school districts haven't bitched enough.

So when people complain about property taxes, directly point fingers at the Ohio legislature and Governor because they're doing what they've always done — force you to fund the only thing — public schools — the Ohio Constitution requires them to fund.

It's governmental malpractice. And our kids are the ones who suffer.