

Beginning with the Northwest Land Ordinance of 1785, the foundation governing documents in Ohio have directed state government to restrict school tax funds to only public school entities. Part IV of a series

The first state education officer in Ohio

Samuel Lewis served as the first Superintendent of Common Schools beginning 1837. This was the first time in Ohio that an individual was commissioned by state government to provide full-time state-level leadership for public education.

In the first year of office, Lewis rode horseback to many parts of the state to assess the conditions and needs of the state common school system. He found that the state had made very limited progress in following through on the School Law of 1825. As a result of the recommendations of Lewis to the legislature some improvements to the state school system were accrued; however, due to poor health, Lewis resigned after 3 years. At that point the legislature abolished the position and assigned the state education duties to the Secretary of State.

It was unfortunate that the legislature was so vacillating with regard to the common school system.

The next post will be a review of the public education provisions crafted by the 1850/1851 Constitutional Convention.