

In recent testimony before the Senate Education Committee, a representative of the pro-privatization of education Buckeye Institute said that the House version of the state budget has a student-first mindset where money follows the student, not the system.

The “student not the system” is a recurring talking point of education privatizers that is just plain doltish. The Ohio Constitution is abundantly clear. The state's responsibility is to secure a thorough and efficient system of common schools (Article VI, section 2) and to make provision by law for the organization, administration, and control of the public school system of the state supported by public funds (Article VI, section 3).

Some of the folks making the “student not the system” mindless appeal may be unaware of the constitutional provisions; others of them may not be able to comprehend the meaning of system; others may not realize that the Constitution of Ohio is the supreme law of the land; and still others, particularly, some in the Ohio General Assembly, may willingly defy the Constitution.

The idea of tax funds following the individual does not work in the operation of highways, fire departments and other safety services, parks and recreation, or any other public service. An open-ended parks and recreation voucher to go to Disney World would be absurd; so is a tax-supported voucher to help fund or fully-fund tuition at a private school.