

The Ohio Constitution mandate that the General Assembly fund a thorough and efficient system of common schools is unique.

Article VI, section 2 is unique; it is distinctive with regard to state responsibility. It is the only section in the state Constitution that requires the state to fund any public service “by taxation or otherwise.”

“The General Assembly 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.”

Please note that the mandate to the General Assembly is not merely to secure a SYSTEM of common schools but a THOROUGH AND EFFICIENT SYSTEM. Note also that the mandate is not to secure three (3) systems i.e. a school district common school system, a private school system and a charter school system. Just one THOROUGH AND EFFICIENT SYSTEM OF COMMON SCHOOLS. Three systems now comprise the Ohio education landscape.

In 1997 the Ohio Supreme Court ruled Ohio’s elementary and secondary school system unconstitutional. What has been the state’s response? The establishment of two additional systems, private and charter schools, while the constitutionally required system is neglected. The system required by the Constitution is being starved for lack of state funds, while the voucher and charter school systems are sumptuously plastered with state tax funds.

The typical state official may not be aware that “a thorough and efficient system of public common schools” is the supreme obligation of the State of Ohio.

Public school personnel and advocates may wish to inform citizens that the state, NOT THE LOCAL PROPERTY TAXPAYERS, is responsible for securing a thorough and efficient system of common schools.

Many public school board members, administrators, educators and support staff are not speaking out in support of the public common school system due to fear of retaliation from state elected officials. Ultimately, who is in charge? Ohio citizens!