The meaning of Article VI, section 2 of the Ohio Constitution: "The General Assembly shall make such provisions, by taxation, or otherwise, as, with the income arising from the school trust fund, 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." Part 5

The emphasis of Part 5 of this series is that Article VI, section 2 places the responsibility of funding public schools squarely on the General Assembly. Although the General Assembly may require the local districts to raise a portion of the total cost of public education, the state is held responsible by the Constitution to secure a "thorough and efficient system of common schools throughout the state."

The premise of voucher advocates is that the state is required to fund students (money follows the students). This premise is completely in error. The Constitution requires the state to fund a system of common schools throughout the state.

The system required by the Constitution is one that is thorough and efficient. It is not to be merely a system, but a thorough and efficient system.

During deliberations of the Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission a few years age, a Commission member proposed that the words "thorough and efficient" be stricken from Article VI, section 2. That proposal had the purpose of relieving the legislature of any meaningful responsibility for public education. Without the "thorough and efficient" standard, the legislature is off the hook.

"Thorough and efficient will be discussed in the next post in this series.