



Ohio's Voucher System Harms Our Public Schools

The expansion of Ohio's voucher system significantly benefits private schools while stealing educational dollars away from public schools. While originally designed to help low-income students in struggling districts, the voucher system has now become a universal entitlement for families of all income levels. This unconstitutional system has grown rapidly across the state as well as in our own districts. For example, from 2021 to 2024, vouchers issued in Swanton Local increased 328% and Evergreen Local by 484%. In 2025, more than 143,000 private school vouchers were issued statewide, costing taxpayers nearly \$776 million this year alone; money that could have strengthened public schools in every Ohio community. This number continues to climb as the state diverts more funding from local public schools to private schools.

History of Vouchers in Ohio

Ohio's school voucher experiment began in 1995 with the Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Program, one of the first of its kind in the nation. It was initially limited to students in Cleveland's lowest-performing schools. In 2006, lawmakers created the statewide EdChoice Scholarship, expanding eligibility to students assigned to low-rated public schools. Over time, legislators continued to broaden access, creating additional voucher programs for special needs and low-income students. Then, in 2023, lawmakers made vouchers universal, allowing every family to receive state funding toward private school tuition, a drastic shift from the program's original purpose. One that is publicly funded but privately controlled.

Your Tax Dollars Are Funding Private Education

Many local taxpayers are unaware that their state tax dollars are being used to fund private, often religious schools. This means taxpayers are subsidizing private education! Private schools can choose which students to admit, are not held to public school accountability standards, and are not required to educate all children.

Here's how it works:

- The state budget includes a single line item for K–12 education. Every dollar spent on vouchers for private school students is a dollar not available for public schools like those in Fulton County.
- When that money leaves the system, local districts must turn to their community to fill the gap.
- Even residents without school-age children are affected, because local tax levies are often the only option districts have left to replace the funding that's been diverted to private schools.

The Impact on Local Public Schools

Public schools operate on a state funding formula that already underfunds our students. The base cost to educate a student, as determined by the state, is \$8,241.61. The state is paying more to private schools per student than it does to fully fund public education for Ohio's children. The result? Taxpayers must make up the difference, leading to increased pressure for local levies to maintain quality programs and staff.

Money received by Fulton Co. Schools from the State vs. State money provided for private school vouchers

School District	State Share to Local Schools in Fulton Co.	State Voucher for Grades K-8	State Voucher for Grades 9-12
Archbold	\$2,237.65	\$6,166	\$8,408
Evergreen	\$1,500.99	\$6,166	\$8,408
Fayette	\$8,253.83	\$6,166	\$8,408
Pettisville	\$6,683.06	\$6,166	\$8,408
Pike Delta York	\$3,713.14	\$6,166	\$8,408
Swanton	\$2,363.37	\$6,166	\$8,408
Wauseon	\$4,493.80	\$6,166	\$8,408

Public Schools Still Carry the Cost & Accountability

Public schools must educate every child, follow every accountability measure, and be transparent about their finances. In addition, public schools are still fiscally responsible for providing a wide-range of services when students leave for private schools including:

- Special education evaluations, services for students with disabilities, auxiliary services such as speech therapy, psychological testing, and certain health services
- Transportation to and from private schools within required limits

Private schools receiving vouchers are **not** required to:

- Accept all students, regardless of disability, language barrier, or academic history
- Administer state tests or participate in Ohio's report card system
- Publicly disclose how taxpayer dollars are spent
- Follow the same licensure, hiring, curriculum, or transparency standards required of public schools

An Unsustainable Shift

State lawmakers claim the Fair School Funding Plan, designed to provide predictable and equitable funding for public schools, is "unsustainable." Yet the state now spends nearly \$1 billion annually on private school vouchers that have been ruled unconstitutional. Those funds can and should be used to fully fund the Fair School Funding Plan that serves 90% of Ohio's children. As rural districts like those in Fulton County continue to lose funding to private schools that can selectively admit students and operate without oversight, the consequences are clear: higher local taxes, larger class sizes, fewer programs, and reduced opportunities for students who remain in public schools.

Standing Up for Public Education

Ohio's Constitution makes it clear, the state's obligation is to maintain a "thorough and efficient system of common schools." Public education is a shared responsibility and a cornerstone of strong communities. Redirecting public money to private institutions is unconstitutional and undermines this very foundation.

Our message is simple: Public money should fund public schools. Our Fulton County Schools and every public school in Ohio deserve a fair, fully funded, and sustainable future.

Contact Information for Our State Legislators

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Sincerely,

Dr. Jayson Selgo, Superintendent - Archbold Area Schools

Mr. Eric Smola, Superintendent - Evergreen Local Schools

Dr. Angela Belcher, Superintendent - Fayette Local School District

Mr. Josh Clark, Superintendent - Pettisville Schools

Mr. Doug Ford, Superintendent - Pike-Delta-York Local School District

Mr. Chris Lake, Superintendent - Swanton Local School District

Mr. Troy Armstrong, Superintendent - Wauseon Exempted Village School District