

THE PLAIN DEALER

Letter to the Editor

School districts will lose money, even as Ohio property taxes rise: letter to the editor

July 16, 2013

By Other Voices

What the Ohio General Assembly did recently to education is extremely troubling. While legislators are trying to fool the public into thinking that somehow they increased money for education, in fact, school districts are receiving \$515 million less than they received from the state three years ago.

Three out of four Ohio school districts have less state revenue than they did then, including all districts in Cuyahoga County, except for one. The total state revenue removed from Cuyahoga County districts under this budget is a staggering \$181.8 million, or more than \$6 million on average. About \$82 million alone has been removed from the Cleveland Municipal School District -- the largest cut of any district in the state.

And these cuts don't include the additional money districts will be losing to charter schools, 70 percent of which will rate an F on the new report card. Currently, every kid not in a charter school loses 6.5 percent of her state money because charters remove so much from districts. Most of the dollars sent to charters from Cuyahoga County districts go to a charter that performs far worse than the district. And this budget fails to reward the truly excellent charters in Cuyahoga County, benefiting instead big campaign contributors who run mostly failing charter schools. Finally, every district will be subject to losing money to private school vouchers, even if the school is highly rated.

In short, this budget represents an attack on public education. In the 2010-2011 school year, 50 percent of the revenue for education came from the state -- the first time that's happened in three decades. Today, that number is back down to about 47 percent. The Ohio Supreme Court has ruled four times that the state's duty is to reduce the need for property taxes to pay for schools. This budget will continue to increase the need. Since 2011, a record \$1.3 billion in new levy money to fund operations have been before Ohio voters as property taxpayers continued to foot the bill for our legislators' constitutional failure. Cleveland voters know this all too well from last year's 15-mill levy.

To add insult to injury, since the state legislature decided to eliminate state support of property tax cuts in this budget, any legislator who voted for it will have voted for what could be the largest property tax increase in state history.

Stephen Dyer, Green

Dyer is a former state representative and current education policy fellow at Innovation Ohio, a Columbus-based think tank.

Original Article:

http://blog.cleveland.com/letters/2013/07/school_districts_will_lose_mon.html