

Charter schools see no fairness with the Cupp, Patterson 'Fair School Funding Plan'

PHOTO

There has been plenty of buzz around the state capital with anticipation about Rep. Cupp (R-Lima) and Rep. Patterson (D-Ashtabula) and their new bill they called the, 'Fair School Funding Plan'. They outlined their objective was to provide a fairer distribution of state funding to school districts – and provide additional funding to help schools whose students live in poverty.

But, there seems to be two glaring complications. Their method for distribution of funds call for an additional \$1.2 billion taxpayer dollars over the biennium.

Secondly, this 'fair' funding bill completely ignores funding needs of public charter schools, vouchers and STEM schools.

It's inconceivable that the Cupp, Patterson workgroup spent more than a year meeting with representatives from district schools and their stakeholders without once ever extending and invitation to any stakeholders of schools choice that represents nearly a quarter of a million students.

And now that Rep. Cupp and Rep. Patterson have officially announced their 'fair' funding bill, presented funding simulations, held multiple press conferences attempting to include their bill in the state's biennium budget – have announced that now they are ready to meet with charter school stakeholders.

One key component of Cupp, Patterson plan would be to create direct funding for Ohio's (300) charter schools. But, the creation of a separate line of funding could be perilous for charter schools. A future governor who doesn't support charter schools could easily eliminate them from Ohio's budget with a stroke of his pen.

School districts would love for charter schools to be shifted to direct funding. With their prospects of additional funding from the Cupp, Patterson funding plan, combined with the possibility of charter schools moving to direct funding would eliminate any pass through deductions for charter school students would plump-up their bottom line beyond imagination.

Cleveland Schools CEO Eric Gordon commented that this new funding plan left five urban districts with flat funding – Cleveland, Toledo, Lorain, Dayton, Youngstown and East Cleveland.

While the Cupp, Patterson plan attempted to redistribute state funding to districts in a more equitable manner – you should look beyond state funding and consider the school districts 'total' source of funding – which, for school districts, also includes funding from local property tax. Let's look at the 'total' per pupil funding of those five urban districts.

Cleveland	\$21,689
Toledo	19,376
Lorain	
Dayton	22,915
Youngstown	25,836
East Cleveland	25,151

Since the Cupp, Patterson school funding plan purports to be based on fairness let's consider a few facts.

Except for a limited number of charter schools in Cleveland most charters do not have access to any to local property taxes.

While the vast number of charter schools outperform urban districts – their total per pupil funding is between double and triple the level of funding of charters.

The Cupp-Patterson plan completely ignores charter schools doing nothing to bring any level of equity to their per pupil funding.