# Ohio's rising voucher funding risks deepening public school inequities



School voucher programmes in Ohio have become a contentious issue, with significant implications for the state's traditional public education system, upon which roughly 80% of Ohio’s children depend. These programmes use public funds to subsidise private-school tuition, diverting money away from public schools and raising concerns about equity and funding adequacy.

According to a letter published by The Plain Dealer, public schools in Ohio have received only a modest 1.5% funding increase this year, with an even smaller increase anticipated for the next academic year. In contrast, funding for voucher programmes is set to increase by 9.4%, with further rises expected. This disproportionate allocation is expected to exacerbate challenges within public schools, including overcrowded classrooms and insufficient resources to meet the diverse needs of students. The letter highlights the risks of funneling public money into private education, which is not subject to the same legal protections against discrimination regarding sex, race, religion, gender, or disability as public institutions are. Additionally, vouchers often do not cover the full cost of tuition, placing low-income families at a disadvantage and forcing many children to remain in increasingly underfunded public schools.

Data supporting these concerns comes from reports that the per-student value of Ohio’s EdChoice voucher programme has now surpassed the per-student funding that many public schools receive. The state budget for these voucher scholarships allocates $1.9 billion over two years, allowing families with incomes up to 450% of the federal poverty line to qualify for full scholarships. This expansion has sparked debate about whether public schools, facing comparatively limited funding increases, will be able to adequately serve their student populations.

Critics argue that the growing investment in voucher programmes, while politically popular among certain groups, destabilises the public school system at a time when it already faces significant pressures. They point to the need for stronger, more equitable funding policies that prioritise the stability and quality of public education. The challenge will be for Ohio’s next governor and policymakers to address these issues amid diverging views on school funding and educational choice. The current governor’s decision to abandon the Fair School Funding Plan has been cited as a factor likely to deepen funding shortfalls and exacerbate inequalities within the state’s education system.

In summary, Ohio's increasing prioritisation of voucher programmes raises profound questions about the future of public education in the state. The disparity between rising voucher funding and stagnant public school budgets threatens to undermine educational equity and quality, especially for the majority of children who rely on the public system.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.cleveland.com/letters/2025/09/voucher-programs-hefty-spending-increases-put-public-schools-at-risk.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.cleveland.com/letters/2025/09/voucher-programs-hefty-spending-increases-put-public-schools-at-risk.html), [[2]](https://www.ideastream.org/education/2023-08-17/private-school-vouchers-now-higher-than-state-funding-many-ohio-public-schools-get-per-student)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.ideastream.org/education/2023-08-17/private-school-vouchers-now-higher-than-state-funding-many-ohio-public-schools-get-per-student), [[4]](https://www.ideastream.org/education/2023-08-17/private-school-vouchers-now-higher-than-state-funding-many-ohio-public-schools-get-per-student)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.cleveland.com/letters/2025/09/voucher-programs-hefty-spending-increases-put-public-schools-at-risk.html)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.cleveland.com/letters/2025/09/voucher-programs-hefty-spending-increases-put-public-schools-at-risk.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ideastream.org/education/2023-08-17/private-school-vouchers-now-higher-than-state-funding-many-ohio-public-schools-get-per-student> - In Ohio, the per-student value of the EdChoice voucher program has surpassed the per-student funding for many public schools. The state budget allocated $1.9 billion for these scholarships over two years, with families earning up to 450% of the poverty line eligible for full scholarships. This expansion has led to concerns that public schools are receiving less funding, potentially impacting their ability to meet students' needs. ([ideastream.org](https://www.ideastream.org/education/2023-08-17/private-school-vouchers-now-higher-than-state-funding-many-ohio-public-schools-get-per-student?utm_source=openai))
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