

## Summary of Youngstown League findings on Local School Finance

What the Youngstown League has learned has led the members to take an active role in bringing **Ohio's Public Schools Severe Fiscal Problems**, specifically our local excellent schools, to the attention of Mahoning County Voters. Our hope is to help understand the magnitude of the problem. The Youngstown League can also offer assistance as you work with your local schools to assess their financial situation and bring that information to the attention of the public.

**Taxpayers have a right to know how their state and local tax dollars are being spent.** Only if they have accurate information can they act as responsible citizens to effect the outcomes they desire. In the public forum we took the position that "these are the facts" and were not advocating a particular position or acting for a levy. The experts for our forum were Bill Phillis from the Coalition for Equity and Adequacy in School Funding and Steve Dyer, who specifically addressed Ohio's School Funding Model, and the local school treasurers or superintendents who used charts to present the same information for each district.

Fifty-one percent of Ohioans believe that the fiscal problems can be solved by the schools spending their dollars more wisely according to a recent Quinnipiac University survey. Only 37 percent believe that public schools need to receive more money from government. It seems likely that access to factual information would dramatically change those percentages. **These are some sample true/false questions to focus the attention of the audience on the presentations:** 1. When property gets reevaluated every 6 years and the value goes up so too do my taxes. 2. School choice affects the finances of my local excellent school district. 3. My local property taxes support private education including parochial and for-profit. 4. Schools with a diverse student population are important to the future of our nation. 5. Charter Schools perform better than public schools. 6. Charter Schools spend more on instruction and less on administration than Public Schools.

**Local Tax Dollars along with state dollars leave the local public schools to support school choice (including charters and vouchers as well as religious schools).** When a student leaves a public school district, the amount transferred is almost always more than the state foundation funding provides to the district for that pupil: On average nearly \$3,500 of local tax money is added to the state funds [see ODE Per Pupil Average Resident Student and Community School Student Chart for FY12}. The **Cost Per Student of Ohio's School Choice** is: **Community Schools and open enrollment** is \$5,703; **Community schools for special education** is \$7,223.90 to \$30,126.69; **Autism Scholarship** \$20,000 and **Jon Peterson Scholarship** \$7,196 to \$20,000. The **Local School District must transfer these amounts**, leaving most school districts with less money per pupil than follow for pupil's leaving the public schools.

**Charter School Funding and Performance:** \$774,404,507. (FY2012) was deducted from public school funding for community school students.

Latest ODE data avg. expenditure per pupil

Public districts	Non e-school charter schools	All e-schools
\$10,110.72	\$10,165	\$8,027

**Overall Public/Charter Comparison** You can view the report card results at:

<http://education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=1&ContentID=131230>

	Public	Charter
Excellent with Distinction	138 or 23%	4 or 1%
Excellent	249 or 41%	26 or 7%
Effective	172 or 28%	55 or 16%
Continuous Improvement	38 or 6%	96 or 27%
Academic Watch	11 or 1.8%	55 or 15.6%
Academic Emergency	2 or .2%	66 or 18.7%
Not Rated		50 or 14.7

Boardman Local Schools is an example of the **effect of school choice on an excellent with distinction school** for the FY12.

Total State Funding	No of resident students	<b>Avg. per pupil for resident students</b>	Total Community School Deduction	No Community Students	<b>Avg. per Com.Sch. Student</b>
\$6,540,075.73	4,724.35	<b>1,384.33</b>	\$790,561.03	102.91	<b>7,682.06</b>

The academic grades by the Ohio Department of Education for Charter Schools receiving funding from Boardman Schools FY2012

	Funding Sent	Students Attending	Avg. per pupil
Academic Emergency	\$125,660	16.1	\$7,804.06
Academic Watch	\$179,791	18.5	\$9,718.43
Continuous Improvement	\$256,575	38.87	\$6,600.84
Effective	\$201,057	25.36	\$7,928.11
Not Rated	\$5,703	1	\$2,851.50
Excellent	\$1,198	.21	\$6,704.76

In a policy brief from Arizona State University by David Arsen of Michigan State University and Yongmei Ni of the University of Utah found that **“charter schools on average spend \$774 more per pupil per year on administration and \$1141 less on instruction than traditional public schools.”** In Ohio the breakdown of per pupil expenditure percentages is

	Public	Charter
Administrative	12.69%	26.20%
Building operations	20.11%	11.69%
Staff Support	2.13%	5.41%
Pupil Support	9.06%	4.0%
Instructional Per-Pupil	56.01%	52.70%

Current Financial Picture 2012: **More and More Reliance on Local Homeowner Property Taxes**

1. State money: State reduced public school funding 1.8 billion for FY 2012 & 2013
2. Federal funds; 1 billion loss of one-time funds from FY 2011
3. Property Valuation: Heavy Emphasis on local property tax in the state's school funding formula, denounced by Ohio Supreme Court in 1997, has worsened because it counts for a greater percentage of local property taxable dollars that is made up of Tangible Personal Property Tax (reduced to zero in 2013 from billions in the 1990s); Class II business property (declined as a proportion of local property valuations since the 1990s); Public utility personal tangible property (decreased also since 1990s) **Home Owners Property: Overall It was less than half of the total Local Property Valuation of the State in 1990; Home Owners Property now accounts for 3/4 of the total.**

Also Contributing to the Financial Problems of Local School Districts is the cuts in state support to counties and municipal governments, making those more dependent upon local taxes for survival. . **Policy Matters new report, [Intensifying Impact: State budget cuts deepen pain for Ohio communities](#), shows how your county is being affected. . [Click here to learn what's happening in your county](#) .** From our perspective, issues for the League include:

1. Increasing reliance on local property taxes
2. Expanding school choice [vouchers, charters, open enrollment] diverting public funds to private for-profit and non-profit entities and threatening the life and quality of education in our public schools
3. Increasing loss of Transparency and accountability to the taxpayers
4. Removing governance of education from local citizenry to non-elected boards
5. Increasing politization of State Board of Education: 8 members appointed by the governor

For help in Arranging a Public Forum for your local school districts contact Barbara Brothers: [bbrothers@neo.rr.com](mailto:bbrothers@neo.rr.com) or 330-744-4846 LWV of Greater Youngstown or Joan Platz, [joan.platz@gmail.com](mailto:joan.platz@gmail.com)