

Study finds school funding efforts slowed during last 10 years

A new study – *20 years of School Funding Post-DeRolph* – conducted by the Ohio Education Policy Institute’s Howard Fleeter and commissioned by the Buckeye Association of School Administrators, Ohio Association of School Business Officials and Ohio School Boards Association was recently released.

The report summarizes how K-12 public school funding has changed since Ohio implemented a new funding formula after the Ohio Supreme Court ruled Ohio’s school funding system unconstitutional in the *DeRolph* case.

According to Fleeter, about 75 percent of the growth in state and local funding for districts over the last 20 years occurred between fiscal years 1999 and 2009, with per pupil funding increases of 35.3 percent. Since that time, the report indicates, per pupil funding decreased by 1.9 percent throughout the more recent ten-year period.

Over the past two decades, district funding increased 27.3 percent – about 1.4 percent annually. The poorest 20 percent of districts received increases totaling 29.4 percent, while the wealthiest 20 percent saw increases of 25.6 percent.

Fleeter suggests that policy makers should consider tax policy, in addition to reconsidering the funding formula, noting that phasing out the tangible personal property tax and implementing major income-tax cuts likely impact educating funding.

In an interview with Gongwer News Service, Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) challenged Fleeter’s position that education funding hasn’t consistently been a top legislative priority, noting an increase of \$200 million in the current budget despite a \$1 billion projected revenue shortfall.

