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# Thoughts on School Funding

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SPRINGBORO, Ohio – This week I found an article that researches some of the thoughts of Ohioans regarding school funding. As I started to paraphrase the article, I realized I was missing a lot. So I provide you with the article quoted directly from the Rotunda News October 13, 2008.

## **Summit Addresses Facets, History of School-Funding Debate**

Former Senate President Richard Finan was among those debating the legacy of the Ohio Supreme Court's DeRolph rulings at a summit put on by the KnowledgeWorks Foundation on Monday - the same day the foundation released a poll showing three quarters of state residents think school funding reform is a high priority.

KnowledgeWorks called together the "Citizens' Summit on Ohio School Funding" in Columbus to host discussions on a range of topics related to how public schools are governed and funded, and the political process surrounding those tasks.

## **Poll Results**

KnowledgeWorks' polls found that 19.6 percent of respondents think changing school funding should be government officials' highest priority, while 56.1 percent think it should be a high priority "along with other issues."

Twelve percent of respondents said improving the quality of public education should be government's highest priority, while 45.8 percent said attracting businesses and jobs to the state should be highest.

Among education issues, 23.6 percent of respondents said making sure students are ready for college or the workplace should be the state government's top priority in the next two years, followed closely by 23.5 percent of respondents who said changing school funding should be the top priority. Meanwhile, improving basics such as math and science education was the top priority for 17.1 percent, followed by improving teacher performance, 12.5 percent, and improving the performance of struggling schools, 11.9 percent.

Poll respondents had a better view of their local districts than of education statewide. About 50 percent of respondents designated their local schools "excellent" or "good" versus about 41 percent statewide. Likewise, 14.1 percent rated the quality of public education in Ohio overall as "poor," versus 10.7 percent giving that distinction to their local districts.

Among other poll findings are the following:

- 37.6 percent say voters should determine, through annual referenda, how much of the state budget goes to public education.
- 34.7 percent said per-pupil funding should be paid as a flat rate, identical for every student.
- 45.3 percent said the state should spend more money on public education, but only as much as can be redirected from other parts of the budget, while 20.7 said it should spend the same amount and 19.1 said it should spend more, even if that means raising taxes.
- 56.2 percent think the state doesn't spend enough on public education.
- 62.1 percent "strongly favor" or "somewhat favor" creating a state income tax on earnings to fund education in exchange for a reduction in property taxes.
- 82.9 percent "strongly favor" or "somewhat favor" requiring the state to allocate a certain percentage of its budget to education each year.
- 84.6 percent "strongly favor" or "somewhat favor" requiring small districts to consolidate services, while 51.7 percent "strongly favor" or "somewhat favor" requiring them to merge.

The poll, conducted by Fallon Research and Communications Inc., surveyed 812 people, with a margin of error of plus-or-minus 3.43 percent, and a male-female ratio of 48-52.