

Timeline of DeRolph vs. Ohio

May, 1991: A lawsuit is filed in Perry County Common Pleas Court on behalf of five Ohio school districts contending that the state has failed to meet its own constitutional requirement of funding public schools in a thorough and efficient manner.

October, 1993: After considerable legal skirmishing, the trial begins in New Lexington in the courtroom of Common Pleas Court Judge Linton D. Lewis, Jr.

July, 1994: After hearing 70 witnesses and reviewing 500 exhibits, Judge Lewis rules that Ohio's system of school funding is unconstitutional.

August, 1994: The state appeals the decision of Judge Lewis arguing that, rather than the courts, it should be the Ohio General Assembly which determines the level of school aid.

August, 1995: By a margin of 2-1, the appeals court reverses Lewis' decision.

October, 1995: The Ohio Coalition for Equity & Adequacy in School Funding appeals to the Ohio Supreme Court.

March, 1997: The Ohio Supreme Court, in a 4-3 vote overturns the appellate court decision and compels the state legislature to rework the state funding system and reduce its reliance on property taxes.

May, 1998: The Ohio General Assembly allocates \$300 million a year to bolster new school construction and repairs of older facilities.

February, 1999: Perry County Judge Lewis hands down a decision determining that the Ohio Legislature has failed to comply with the Ohio Supreme Court's order for a "complete and systematic overhaul" of school funding in the state.

May, 2000: The Ohio Supreme Court agrees with Lewis' decision that the Ohio Legislature has failed again to fix the school-funding system.

June, 2001: Oral arguments are heard within the Ohio Supreme Court as to whether the most recent legislative fix meets the high court's directive.

Sept. 2001: In another 4-3 ruling, the Ohio Supreme Court rules that the system of school funding remains yet unconstitutional.

December, 2002: After much legal wrangling, the Ohio Supreme Court once again affirmed that the system of school funding in Ohio was unconstitutional. At the same time, it directed the Ohio General Assembly to "enact a school funding scheme that is thorough and efficient."

July, 2009: After years of court battles, decisions, injunctions and appeals, Ohio Governor Ted Strickland was able to shepherd through a sweeping and definitive school funding bill that will significantly reduce the state's traditional over-reliance on property taxes.