Our public school system remains in the doldrums. And until that problem is fixed, Cleveland will remain just another urban area that cannot attract middle class families.

Last week, Mayor Frank Jackson told a City Club crowd of about 900 that the city of Cleveland is moving ahead in many areas.

The municipality’s budget is balanced despite more state funding cuts. This happened due to income tax from downtown construction projects, new workers and fees for development projects.

Cuts made last year will be restored and 20 police officers have been called back to duty. In addition, city workers will get a three percent raise.

Right now there is about $7-billion worth of development project being built or planned, to include the highly anticipated downtown Horseshoe Casino scheduled to open in May.

To be sure, the Medical Mart can’t be left out of the development equation and the Flats continue resurgence in mixed use office projects.

All in all, things are looking up for Cleveland except for one thing.

Our public school system remains in the doldrums. And until that problem is fixed, Cleveland will remain just another urban area that cannot attract middle class families.

At the end of the day, the Cleveland Municipal School District is in a quagmire of declining enrollment, less than stellar academic achievement and ongoing high school drop out rates.

Mayor Jackson is right to be concerned, but he’s also impassioned about uplifting the school district he controls.

He has a right to be.

Any city or town is defined by the quality of its school system.

One need only look to affluent communities that make up Cuyahoga County and the difference can be seen.

We’ve always said that being poor doesn’t mean one cannot achieve educational success. And until this message gets across to the countless families living below the poverty line in Cleveland, Jackson’s dream of a quality education system will be elusive.