

CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF OHIO

February 7, 2020

Representatives and Senators
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215-6111

Dear Legislative Leaders

The 2020/2021 school year is just seven months away. Legislative delays in finalizing the EdChoice Scholarship system cause us grave concern. The Catholic Conference of Ohio urges Ohio legislators to resolve differences between House and Senate versions of the EdChoice Scholarship system immediately.

Parents need to decide where to enroll their children in school. Schools need to make decisions about teachers' contracts and budgets. Every day that goes by makes the situation more difficult for everyone.

We believe that a just and viable solution should include the following:

- **Meaningful educational choice for families**
Parents are the primary educators of their children. They have the right to choose the education that best meets their children's needs. EdChoice makes this choice real;
- **Academic continuity for students and a way for families to keep their children together**
Any changes to the current program should grandparent present scholarship recipients and their siblings;
- **Significant Increase in the eligibility threshold for EdChoice Expansion**
Any change to the EdChoice Expansion Program should raise the eligibility threshold **significantly** beyond 200 percent of the federal poverty level;
- **The least disruption to families who are relying on EdChoice for 2020/2021**
Families are already planning for the next school year; they counted on their eligibility to receive an EdChoice scholarship when they enrolled their children in a Catholic school for 2020/2021;
- **Sufficient and stable funding**
Parents whose children are awarded EdChoice scholarships should be able to depend on the availability of those scholarships for the duration of their children's K-12 education.

Catholic schools have long provided a vibrant, values-based education focused on forming the whole person. Ohio has long benefited by the education young people receive in Catholic schools.

EdChoice Scholarships help make this educational option possible for children of diverse backgrounds and economic means. For their good and for the good of our society, EdChoice should be continued and strengthened. We ask the General Assembly to give families and schools this assurance by returning to negotiations immediately.

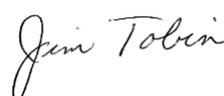
Respectfully,



Carolyn Jurkowitz
Executive Director



Larry Keough
Associate Director



Jim Tobin
Associate Director