

Thank you Chairman Jones and Members of the House Bill 9 Conference Committee.

My name is Dr. Kadee Anstadt and I am the superintendent of Washington Local Schools, a small urban district of about 7,400 students. Over 50% of our students qualify for a free/reduced lunch. The state of Ohio caps our district's funding at \$4,085...essentially leaving over 2,000 students unfunded.

Washington Local generally does not lose students to private schools. While some parents certainly choose private education, our enrollment is steady and has been for some time. In November, our residents went to the polls and overwhelmingly approved a combined bond and operating levy that will allow our district to rebuild all of our schools—the first two which were built in 1917 and 1930.

Now enter the changes to the EdChoice scholarship. Although our voters overwhelmingly said we believe in Washington Local and our enrollment is steady, our grades on the state report card labeled us “failing.” Washington Local was a district that received Excellent ratings before the report card changed, but suddenly was a D and F district. With the last minute legislative changes to EdChoice, our district is set to lose over \$750,000—about ½ of what voters approved for additional operating expenses in November. No voter in my district voted for that money to be siphoned to private schools. They voted to support public schools. Because the state caps our funding, if EdChoice is allowed to move forward, our district will have to go back to voters in two years—not because we are fiscally irresponsible, but because the state has not only capped our district, but then also froze state funding, and is now subsidizing private school students.

I am here today to protect our local voters. They are calling me everyday asking me to defend their commitment to Washington Local. As a capped district, these dollars are being siphoned from our local tax dollars. These are funds that will go to schools with unlicensed teachers, schools that are free from audits, schools that can and do discriminate against students with disabilities, schools not required to take state tests or follow any of the same laws we follow as public schools. What we do know is that when their private school students took the same state test we did in 2018, our students outperformed them by over 20% points...so legislators changed the rules so there could be no comparison.

This is Jordyn (hold up picture), a senior at Whitmer High School. Whitmer is considered a failing school. Jordyn will enter Howard University in the fall to study communications and public relations. This will be after she competes at both the State and National Speech and Debate tournaments, completes a full courseload of AP, college credit plus, career tech and honors courses, and logs a 4.1 gpa. She is the student ambassador for the WLS BOE. I could tell you hundreds of Jordyn stories. We receive about \$4,000 for Jordyn. Jordyn would like me to ask you why she is only worth \$4,000 and a student who attends a private school is worth \$6,000. She'd like to know who voted for that? She'd like to know why a local private high school with over 2/3 of its students receiving vouchers is still called a private school. Over 3,500 voters in my district want to know what the state is going to do to protect their local tax dollars from being siphoned to schools with no accountability for those dollars. When did Ohio become the state who steals one child's opportunity in order to provide privilege to another ?