

Representatives,

Our family started praying about enrolling our first and fourth graders at Kingsway Christian School in Fall of 2019. We knew our family could not afford to send two children to Kingsway without the EdChoice Scholarship (tuition for two would be about \$12,000 per year). Orrville Elementary School where our children currently attend had been on the designated school list for 2018-2019 and was on it again when released Nov. 2019. OES being on the list felt like God had opened a door and we were so thankful for that.

Both children are so excited about the possibility of attending Kingsway in the Fall of 2020. We filled out all our enrollment paperwork, Edchoice information and paid \$150 in application fees in preparation of the February 1 application date. Now my children's future is up in the air. This is such poor policy to be making changes to this program right as we are supposed to be applying.

We chose Kingsway for our children because of its core values and size. Our daughter actually attended kindergarten at Kingsway 2018-2019 school year. She had the most amazing experience and would tell her big brother often about how much she loved school and all the people he needed to meet. We chose Kingsway that year because of her August 5 birthday, so our local school district would not take her. She is now excelling in first grade because of that great foundation. She often asks to return to Kingsway, she missed the smaller classes and care she received there. Her kindergarten classroom was 11 students, her first-grade classroom is 24.

My son's school experience has certainly not been as wonderful as my daughter's. He has had good teachers, I know they care deeply for their students they are just overwhelmed. Having 20 plus elementary age students is not easy. My son has struggled with reading from the start, I think part of it is due to the large kindergarten class and the curriculum used for that year (it seems to be constantly changing). When I would voice concern about his reading each year, it was brushed under the rug until 2nd grade (the district was starting to identify kids who would need help passing the 3rd-grade guarantee). Up until 2nd grade, we were told he just needed to try harder. He was never a behavior problem, always respectful and social...so he fell through the cracks. They had bigger issues to deal with. In 3rd grade, he finally started getting some intensive reading help and passed the 3rd-grade alternative test. He continues to get reading help in 4th grade and his reading has much improved. His test scores are up, yet he continues to feel further and further behind. All the joy of learning has been sucked out of OES. The lunchroom feels like a prison, very little social interaction or much freedom at all. Recess is a joke, the playground is too small and they have put so many rules in place they can't even play. The focus is on crowd control and behavior management instead of the joys of childhood. These kids are under stress constantly and mental health issues are on the rise. This year we started noticing anxiety in our son. We have to make a change.

Next year he will go to middle school, he is not ready. Orrville Middle School is overcrowded and the 8th grade class leaving the building is smaller than the 5th-grade class coming in. Orrville has even considered closing open enrollment to make room. OMS is full of behavior, drug and bullying problems. I do not feel comfortable sending my son there.

In the Spring of 2019, we first heard that OES was on the designated list for EdChoice. But at that point only my son was enrolled at OES so only he could qualify, my daughter would have to attend OES a year before qualifying. Hindsight is 20/20, I wish now that I would have enrolled him at Kingway and got him on EdChoice. If you move forward with the HB9 neither of my children will get the educational experience they want and deserve. HB9 kills my family's school choice opportunity.

HB9 feels like an attack on the middle class. We make very close to 300% poverty level. We are not rich, we work hard, live modestly, and pay plenty of taxes. Even at our income level, we cannot pay \$12,000 a year in schooling fees. It is frustrating that because of our income level our school choice will be removed. Why are our children any less important than others? Many families at the lower-income level have more available resources because they qualify for more aide programs. Our system does not reward families who are good stewards and work hard. Please don't underfund Ohio's EdChoice and turn into a lottery system.

Another problem with HB9 is the lack of accountability for public schools. If the grade card is no longer going to mean anything, why bother. Why bother over testing these kids. Public schools need to address why families want to leave. We want to leave Orrville district because of class size, lack of individualized education and overall culture. Our administration does not care what parents think they look at us as a nuisance...until they want funding that is.

Please take into account district open enrollment policies. The funding would be the same as EdChoice as it currently stands. Some districts are making money as others are losing it. I find it interesting that the districts don't want to talk about that.

The best way to move forward for 2020-2021 is to leave the list as it stands, as families have made decisions based on that. Let us and other families move forward with plans for Fall 2020, schools can all plan for enrollment etc. If you want to address the school report card issue do that, but do it after EdChoice enrollment period is over for 2020. To change the rules in the middle of the game like this is cruel.

Thank you,

Jessica Oswald
Orrville, Ohio