

Dear Legislatures,

Thank you for holding these hearings this week and next. The one thing that we can all agree upon is that this issue needs attention.

Some key points I would like to make:

This issue has been going on since the beginning of ED choice. It has only began to be addressed now that suburban districts are being affected. I live in the Toledo Public School District and this concern and issue has been since the beginning. No one seem to care then, only when some of the more affluent districts were affected did it become an issue.

To move to a Buckeye Opportunity Scholarship based on household income is not really an opportunity if parents do not have access to the additional funding for their child to attend the school of choice. Transportation to get back and forth. Poverty, even at 200% of the poverty level is still hard to live on. It may be called an opportunity scholarship but it seems to be very exclusive if a person can not afford the difference in tuition.

Sadly, the quality of my child's education should not depend on my zip code!! Every single child deserves a quality education.

Emily attends Central Catholic. Emily is a Junior. Without Ed choice, we would have had to take her out of this school! A school she has excelled at. She is a child that went from a 1.7 in 8th grade to currently carrying almost a 3.0 GPA. Emily is a child that has a specific learning disability in Math, Autism, Attention Deficit Disorder, Anxiety and Depression. We received assistance from a grandparent to send her to CCHS and that grandparent is no longer living.

I can tell you that she would not be doing this well without Central Catholic. Emily has a phenomenal educational team that surrounds her. This would not be possible without ED Choice. Emily is not only supported academically but emotionally as well. There is an entire team that surrounds her at CCHS and to interrupt those relationships would have devastating and unrecoverable consequences for her and our family! With her mental health concerns, I can't imagine what a change like this would do to her. She found her social tribe in the band and when she returned from a week at the hospital in adolescent psych unit, they had a welcome back, we love you party for her!

The decisions you are making, not only affects Emily but lots of children like her. Every child should be getting a great education, just as Emily has at Central Catholic. It is critical that the funding continues so that others in Emily's shoes have the opportunity to attend and have the supportive education that Emily has received.

While there is consideration for the school districts, as a parent, I plead with you to change the standard in which failing schools are identified. It is not a problem with the program but with the identification of schools. No school should have a lower grade because they had already reached an A level and because they can not show growth, it becomes failing.

I implore you to make a level playing field! For all students! If there are issues with private schools not being graded, then grade them. Let parents compare apples to apples but please do not take away the choice to take a bite of the apple!

Thank you for attention and willingness to hold hearings on this matter!

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