

To the Primary & Secondary Education Committee:

As the parents of two elementary aged boys in a private school (and two younger children who will enter school in the next few years) in Trumbull County, we urge you to vote quickly in regard to HB 9. Leaving this issue unresolved for several weeks puts many families and schools at a disadvantage as they are trying to determine their educational options for next year and allocate resources toward those decisions. We also urge you to vote in a way that not only maintains but also promotes educational options for families.

We are grateful for the opportunities EdChoice scholarships have given our boys. One of our sons is an advanced, gifted learner while our other son has difficulties learning in some subjects. In a small, private school environment, both of our sons can have their needs met by receiving individual attention so they can learn at their own pace. They are also able to learn from staff who are committed to high standards not only in regard to education, but also in character, compassion and dedication to their students. The values upon which our private school is built are lived each day by the staff.

Though our school's population is small, it is also very diverse and about 85% dependent on EdChoice scholarships. Some families are choosing this private school option as an advantageous alternative to a failing school district, but other families are in financially and academically thriving school districts but want to take advantage of the high ideals and values offered by our private school. Inhibiting educational choice for families ultimately inhibits children from opportunities to receive an education in an environment that is tailored to their unique needs and beliefs.

Again, we urge you to resolve this issue in a timely fashion and in a way that not only enables but also promotes educational options for all children. Children are not "one-size-fits-all". Their education should not be either.

Sincerely,
Ben and Michelle Rinehart