



**Stanley J. Bahorek, Treasurer/CFO**  
**Office of the Treasurer**  
270 E. State Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
Ph. 614-365-6400  
Fax 614-365-5628  
sbahorek@columbus.k12.oh.us

---

*Mission: Each student is highly educated, prepared for leadership and service, and empowered for success as a citizen in a global community.*

---

**Testimony on EdChoice Funding Mechanism**  
**HB 9 Conference Committee**  
**February 13, 2020**

Chairman Jones and members of the Conference Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Stan Bahorek, and I am the Treasurer/CFO for Columbus City Schools. I am here today to speak on the topic of EdChoice and the current funding mechanism for the program.

I would like to begin by first thanking both the House and the Senate for the work your respective chambers have done in an effort to address an issue created by a flawed accountability system and a broken school funding system. These are not easy issues to address – if they were, we would have solved them long ago.

By way of background, Columbus City Schools is Ohio’s largest school district, with approximately 50,000 students attending over 100 schools and programs. About eight percent of our students are identified as gifted and talented, and 18 percent of our students have exceptional needs. Additionally, around 17 percent of our students come from a family for which English is not the primary language, with over 90 different languages spoken throughout the District.

I am not here this afternoon to discuss the merits of the voucher programs or the nuances of the local report card. I am here to discuss the mechanics of the current system for funding vouchers and to urge you to move to a system by which the State pays directly for the program rather than through a series of deductions.

Our primary issue is that because of the disparate funding formula and its artificial cap, the state funds voucher students at a higher per pupil level than it does in-district students. Columbus receives \$3,200 in state aid per enrolled student while students with a voucher, through the deduction mechanism, receive an average of \$5,000 per student. Our solution is for the State to directly fund the voucher programs and eliminate voucher students and the related deduction from our state aid calculation entirely.

Regardless of whether you adhere to the notion that local tax dollars are flowing out to make up the difference in funding or the notion that the deductions are simply a net loss in the amount the State provides for our students, the effect is the same – fewer state resources and a need to balance programmatic and student services with local dollars.

As you continue to work towards a solution – and I am confident that you will find one – I urge you to work towards the elimination of a system dependent upon deductions and one in which the State directly pays for a program it wishes to have.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.