

Names – Elizabeth Wilson and Carlton Townsend for Austin Townsend (8<sup>th</sup> grade). We live in Cincinnati Public School District, with 1 child currently on EdChoice.

In 2010 we began the process of pre-school enrollment for our then 4-year-old son. There were two neighborhood public schools within 1 mile of our home. One of those schools was marked as improving; the other, unfortunately, was failing. When we reached out to the school not failing, we were told we were on the “wrong side of the street,” and our child must attend the failing neighborhood school. Here are some of the staggering statistics with which we were faced in 2010/2011.

- In CPS only 70.3% and 73.6% of third grade students were proficient in reading and math. Therefore, our son faced an almost 30% chance of not being proficient by third grade. Likely much higher if attending a failing school. In that same year, almost 40% of CPS 4<sup>th</sup> graders were not proficient in mathematics. Finally, the graduation rate for that year was only 81.9%,

As parents who were planning to push post-secondary education for our child. We were then faced with the stark reality our child may not receive the basic skills necessary to meet the proficiency requirements for the state of Ohio. Also, what parent wants to be faced with the idea your child has an almost 20% chance of not graduating, be it on time or at all?

Even as a two-parent household at the time, private school tuition was not something we could afford. EdChoice provided both the opportunity and the means by which we could ensure our son attended a school where 95%, or greater, of the students passed the third-grade proficiency test. This is why we chose Corryville Catholic.

As our son begins his journey into high school, here are the statistics with which we are faced.

- Even today the CPS graduation rates have fallen to only 77.9% in 4 years and 79.4% in 5 years. In most recent data, only 54.1% of the 2016 graduating class entered college within 2 years. Only 18.4% represents the proportion of students in CPS who are passing technical assessments. The performance index, or proportion of students passing state tests, is at a meagre 64%.

Again, I ask, what parent wants to face the idea their child has a 22% chance of not graduating. What parent, advocating for post-secondary education, wants to consider there is a 46% chance their child will not go on to college? For our son, with the alternative **at his high school of choice**, not only will he graduate on time there is a 99% likelihood he will go on to a 4-year college/university.

Why would any law maker, educator, or school supervisory official ask us to gamble on our son’s future? We pay the tax dollars for our child’s education, and by not allowing us to choose where and how those dollars are spent – you are asking us to do just that! You are asking us to gamble on whether our child might graduate on time, or at all! By considering doing away with EdChoice, you are potentially forcing us to accept these lower standards. You are forcing us to tell our child it is ok to move from a 99% chance of moving on to post-secondary education to a 46% chance of not going to college at all. Continuing EdChoice will give our son, among other minorities in the inner-city districts, the opportunity to receive the education they deserve. One that guarantees their success.

EdChoice vouchers allow us to choose how our tax dollars educate our children!

EdChoice vouchers will aid in improving education by creating a free market!

EdChoice vouchers allow school districts to overcome racial and other segregating factors!

EdChoice vouchers allow our son to have access to education which is not failing its students!