

Good morning. My name is George Mosholder and I am the principal at St. Timothy School in Columbus, Ohio. I have been the principal at St. Timothy School for fifteen years. I am here today to inform you of the positive impact that the EdChoice Scholarship has had on the entire St. Timothy School Community. This impact has been substantial to many different parties including parents, local community, faculty and staff and myself in general. Please listen with open hearts and minds as I detail the impact these scholarships have had on the entire St. Timothy School Community.

First and foremost, the EdChoice Scholarship has had an extremely positive impact on our families. Many of our families come from disadvantaged backgrounds and long for a strong education for their children. These families value education and see education as the catalyst for bettering themselves. Unfortunately, many of these families live in areas that contain under-performing schools that deal with numerous complexities such as low academic performance, ever-changing faculty and staffs, violence and school safety issues. In the past before the EdChoice program, these families would be forced to attend these schools and hope and pray that their children would be able to overcome their surroundings to better themselves. Once the EdChoice Scholarship program was created, these families now had choices. They had choices to send their children to schools that focused on educating the entire child (academic, social, emotional, spiritual). These families now had the choice to send their children to schools that were able to focus on higher academics. These families were now able to send their children to schools that provided not only a sense of community but also safety. These children now do not have to worry about what is going on at the local school in terms of academics, behaviors, violence and the safety of their children. These parents now feel a sense of calmness that comes from knowing that the schools are not only providing a good education for their children but also a safe place where their children can learn and not be distracted by behaviors that often place their children in harm's way.

Second the children that receive EdChoice Scholarships see numerous benefits as well. Students who are able to take advantage of an EdChoice Scholarship are exposed to a more rigorous curriculum that contains higher expectations for our student body. The students receive not only academic support but also emotional, social and spiritual support. The faculty and staff continuity provides a strong sense of community which allows the students to achieve higher academic success while also recognizing that an entire community is behind them. Before the EdChoice program, these students were limited in these schools with no hope of escaping from this cycle. Now, the EdChoice Scholarship has changed their outlook and provided opportunities for change that they would have never had before.

One impact that the EdChoice Scholarship has had that I did not imagine is the impact it has had on our student body, faculty and staff and even myself. The EdChoice Scholarship has brought much more diversity to our school that we have ever had. The cost of a private education is very expensive and many families are unable to send their children to private schools because of lack of funds. But as a result of the EdChoice Scholarship, these dreams can now become reality. Our school is now made up of children from a variety of backgrounds: racial, cultural and socio-economic to name a few. Our school is much more diverse and our children and faculty and staff are learning more and more about society in general. Our students are not the same and this diversity has enabled everyone to become more understanding and willing and able to help out society and those in need. Our teachers have grown in knowing that many of our students are coming to school with needs that push us to be so much more than teachers: nurses, counselors, parent figures to name a few. These issues have forced the school community to bond and work together to help out students and families in need. While our school has

always had a focus on serving others, the result of more diversity in our schools due to the EdChoice Scholarship has enabled to us witness these societal concerns and directly help out the families in need.

A final impact of the EdChoice Scholarship is the effect it has had on myself as a school principal and human being. The diversity of our student body has forced me to look directly at what I need to do to better society. I now see many of societies' problems in our school and I know that every day I need to wear a different hat for our students. On any given day, I know I need to be a father figure, nurse, counselor, psychologist, cheerleader and caregiver. This has allowed me to take a good hard look at myself and see what I can do more to help out society. In society today, we often do not look internally to fix a problem but we place the blame on others. This EdChoice Scholarship has forced me to look at myself and see what I need to do to help others, especially people living right around us. This Scholarship has made all of our community member's better people.

In conclusion, I just want to reiterate the importance of the EdChoice Scholarships to our schools and communities. I know that there are great schools out there and I am not here to bash any school. I just want to let you know the significance that these scholarships have had on communities and specifically our community. The EdChoice Scholarship provides an avenue for families to escape some schools that unfortunately are encumbered with issues that impede student success. The EdChoice Scholarship provides students with options to attend schools that are able to focus more on important facets of a student's education (academics as well as mental, social, emotional areas) and less on factors that can take away from education (low performance, violence and school safety issues). The EdChoice Scholarship has even allowed our community to strengthen our focus on improving societal issues that plague our communities each and every day. Finally, the EdChoice Scholarship has allowed our entire community to better understand issues that many families face and to be even more empathetic to these familial issues. In a society where it is getting tougher and tougher every day to raise children, the EChoice Scholarship program is making a huge difference in people's lives, including people that do not use the scholarship. I am requesting that you keep the EChoice program and recognize the positive impact it has had on many families and schools. While I understand that not everyone shares my feelings, I do believe that everyone would wish that society would become a better place and that every family have a way of bettering themselves. Please know that the EdChoice Scholarship has achieved both of these results.

Thank you very much for allowing me to speak with you directly from the heart.

Sincerely,

George Mosholder
St. Timothy School Principal

