

To Whom it May Concern:

I am not able to attend the hearings in Columbus due to my work obligations, but I want to provide a statement regarding the Ed Choice Scholarship.

My son Chase is currently a junior at Holy Name High School. He previously received the Jon Petersen Scholarship due to his diagnosis of Autism. Chase is high functioning and smart. Holy Name has been a blessing to him. We did not receive the Ed Choice Scholarship until this year. We choose Ed Choice because it helps to lessen the burden of tuition. In choosing Ed Choice we lost the Jon Petersen scholarship. Jon Petersen is for services only and cannot be applied to tuition of a non-provider school.

Holy Name High School has early intervention classrooms, smaller classrooms and an ability to have more one on one interaction with my son. Chase also has his intervention specialist on site. Chase attended Parma City Schools up until 5th grade. At that time the district moved 5th and 6th grade to middle school and put 8th graders into the high schools. This type of arrangement would not work for my son. Chase needs small classrooms and sometimes more individual interaction with his teachers and with Parma City Schools overcrowding classroom sizes are too big and would cause any progression Chase has made to go backward. Also, Parma City Schools is failing as a school with a D grade.

Since attending Holy Name Chase has maintained a 3.2-3.6 cumulative GPA. He is active in clubs and the bowling team. If you know anything about Autism, part of it is a lack of social skills. I think any teacher, student or administrator at Holy Name will tell you, Chase is social and involved in his Holy Name community. He has made second honors since freshman year and this quarter he made FIRST honors. Holy Name High School is the right school for my son.

I have seen and heard many reports about special needs students being harmed in the Parma City School system by not only other students, but staff as well. Holy Name High School is the best school for Chase and I don't think the Ed Choice Scholarship should be taken from us. Chase will enter his last year of High School next year and I think it is unfair to try and change the rules or the schools that qualify now. We should be able to send our kids to the schools that best suite them. If my son is not attending Parma City Schools then they should not receive the funding intended for him. Holy Name is educating him and doing a damn good job of it!

My daughter attended Normandy High School from 2009-2013. Her entire high school career we were faced with the Parma school board threatening to close her high school. My daughter is now 25 years old and she will tell you that the constant threat of losing her high school ruined her time at her high school. Parma City Schools has had these ongoing issues for as long as I have resided in the community. Its not fair to tell our kids that they cannot choose to have something better. That they cannot choose to go to a school that suites their learning abilities, their needs and will help them to be successful.

I would ask that you not change the Ed Choice Scholarship program and you continue to let us have the option.

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