

My name is Lauren Clements, principal of Corryville Catholic School. Corryville Catholic School, is a small, urban school that has 141 students that are on the traditional EdChoice scholarship. Our students come from all over the Greater Cincinnati area. We have many students that live below the poverty line, but are also the home to many working class families. We are so very thankful for these families that put their trust in Corryville Catholic to educate their child. We are also thankful to the Ohio Legislature for their past support of school choice. I urge you to consider the impact of altering this program. Corryville Catholic is a family, and the thought of our students having to leave this family seems cruel and unfair. When I am registering new families, I often get the chance to discuss why they are leaving their local public school. More times than not, parents express frustration that their child is not receiving the education they deserve, and feel that the school did not provide enough structure in terms of behavior. Please don't send these students back to the environment that their parents were desperate to avoid. Students deserve choice, and we are the BEST choice for their success. This year, we have 17/18 students attending the Catholic high school of their choice. Our Catholic high schools' success speaks for itself. We cannot take this opportunity away from our families.

Corryville Catholic cannot withstand the loss of traditional EdChoice. It seems entirely inequitable to send our students back to public schools that have demonstrated a failure to educate. I know that the amount of public schools that have been added to the designated list has increased dramatically. Can't we administer some common sense to this situation and rectify the list instead of making sweeping changes to the foundation of the program? The public schools that my students would attend are not borderline schools, or recently added to the list. These are schools that have demonstrated a lack of progress for years. My students have come too far socially, academically and emotionally. That is why I am here testifying today. I will fight for their right for school choice.

I am a first year principal, and when I entered this career, I made the choice to work in an urban school. It is no secret that our country struggles to equitably educate students of color. These proposed EdChoice programs are NOT the answer to fix this glaring injustice. Our urban public schools are failing, please grant these students the grace of having a chance at a successful life. Traditional EdChoice is one small step in addressing equitable education for students of all colors.