

Thursday, February 13, 2020

Chairman Jones and members of the House Bill 9 Conference Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today regarding Ohio's EdChoice Voucher program. I am Ryan Lockwood, Treasurer/CFO at Springfield Local Schools in Holland, OH and the proud parent of a 4th grader at Woodmore Local Schools in Woodville, OH.

I am here today to ask for your support of House Bill 9 as initially proposed.

A student in the Springfield Local School District only receives \$2,300 per year from the State of Ohio for his or her education through the State's broken educational funding model. Yet, the EdChoice Voucher program is prepared to move up to \$6,000 per year for the same student to be educated in a parochial school.

I'd like to share the historical significance of Ohio mandated transfer payments exiting the district. During the 2013-2014 school year, the Springfield Local School District saw transfer payments to Community and Charter Schools increase more than \$500,000 to over \$1.9 million. In that school year alone, the State of Ohio removed over \$2.1 million from the district in the form of community school and scholarship transfers.

Move ahead to 2015, after three unsuccessful levy attempts, the Springfield Local School District was on the brink of a financial crisis and was placed into Fiscal Caution by the Ohio Department of Education. The District successfully passed a \$3.9 million emergency levy in November of 2015 to regain some of its financial traction.

Fast forward to the present day, Springfield Local Schools loses over \$2.3 million in transfers to Community and Charter Schools and another \$763,000 in Autism/Peterson Scholarship transfers. We estimate the cost of EdChoice on our district in Year 1 to be slightly under \$1 million dollars. With all these transfer payments, the Springfield Local School District total would be over \$4 million in funds leaving the district. These transfers out make the emergency levy passed in 2015 and renewed again in 2019 completely worthless.

In addition to the transfer dollars out, Springfield Local Schools is forced by the State of Ohio to act as the fiscal agent of State and Federal dollars for the parochial schools in our district. I currently manage an additional \$720,000 State dollars through auxiliary service funds and an additional \$140,000 Federal dollars through the Title programs. The District also sends at least three school buses out daily to provide student transportation for our parochial partners and makes over \$50,000 in payments out to parochial school parents for payment-in-lieu of transportation.

Monetarily speaking, over \$5 million comes into Springfield Local Schools and goes out to other educational entities on a yearly basis. This \$5 million dollars is equivalent to over 11% of the local general fund budget. In student terms, 1 in every 10 Springfield students is being short changed an education. We are a district of 4000 students.

I urge you today to minimize the impact of vouchers on public education through the appropriate measures in House Bill 9. The current public education funding system is broken. We cannot further erode away at the broken model with increased vouchers that will take more money away from public school districts.

Chairman Jones and members of the House Bill 9 conference committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide input regarding Ohio's EdChoice Voucher program. I am happy to address your questions.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Ryan Lockwood III', written in a cursive style.

P. Ryan Lockwood III
Treasurer/CFO
Springfield Local Schools