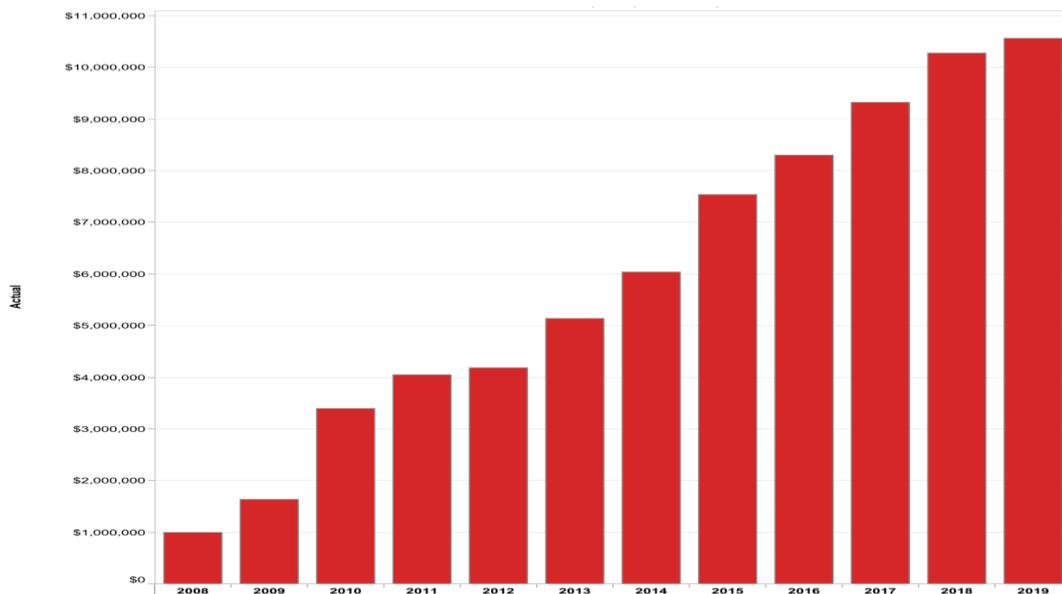


Chairman Jones and members of the House Bill 9 Conference Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today regarding Ohio's EdChoice Voucher program. My name is Ryan Pendleton, Chief Financial Officer for Akron Public Schools. I am here today to testify as an interested party with the goal of talking through the detrimental impacts of the EdChoice deduction to public school institutions such as Akron Public Schools.

Ohio's public school teachers are on the front line of doing more with less. The theme of doing more with less seems to be common place amongst our public education vernacular. This theme is quite sad, but true. Ohio's public school standards are constantly debated and changed, and the results are shared and scrutinized. **The same level of scrutiny and debate is not applied to non-public schools.**

Akron Public Schools serves and educates 21,000 students. Almost 90% of our amazing students and families come to us economically disadvantaged. The chart below represents the money transferred to non-publics under the current EdChoice legislation. If the expansion of EdChoice moves forward, the money transfer from Akron Public Schools to non-public institutions will jump by millions. Akron has almost 30 non-public institutions within the greater Akron area.

Under the expansion of EdChoice, one of these institutions alone will receive an additional \$1.2 million dollars due to the transfer of 200 students who have never attended Akron Public Schools.



Public school districts function at the highest level of accountability in the State. Every metric, test, assessment and expenditure is open to the public and subject to thorough examination. The transfer of almost \$11 million must come with the same level of accountability. Please ask yourself these questions; Do you know how these students perform? Are they served to the level they deserve? Does taxpayer money receive the same watchful eye as they do in Public Schools. As an educator, legislator or taxpayer we need to ask ourselves these questions. Please limit the expansion of EdChoice scholarships and provide funding to these institutions that does not come from local taxpayer subsidy.

Much of the debate around EdChoice can be traced back to a flawed school funding model. The last few weeks of discussion, debate and testimony have led to frustrations shared on **ALL** sides. We ask for a quick and efficient resolution to this debate so we can get to the larger picture of funding schools in a more fair and efficient manner.

Today we have a school funding mechanism that is clearly broken. During the 2019-20 school year over 80% of public school districts were not on the formula. Turn the page to our new biennium budget and now 100% of the districts are not on a formula.

For the last two years, Representatives Cupp and Patterson have worked on a School Funding reform proposal, now House Bill 305. Please use your time, energy and resources to build on this foundation and develop a new formula that is clear, understandable, reliable and fair. We need this new funding formula in order to ensure the success of ALL Ohio's students.

Thank you chairman and members of the committee for the opportunity to present testimony.