

House Bill 9 Testimony
Dr. David Quattrochi, Superintendent
Carrollton Exempted Village School District
February 15, 2020

Chairman Jones and members of the House Bill 9 conference committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide pertinent input regarding Ohio's EdChoice Voucher program. My name is Dave Quattrochi, Superintendent of the Carrollton Exempted Village School District in Carroll County. I am here speaking on behalf of the 65,000 students in the 22 school districts in the Stark County Educational Service Center, representing districts in Stark, Carroll, Summit, Tuscarawas, and Wayne Counties.

First of all, we support accountability and competition. It is an important part our democratic belief system.

Second, we commend the House and Senate for your initiatives to fix our fundamentally flawed Report Card; an evaluation instrument that no one really understands.

In regards to House Bill 9 we support aspects of the House plan that represent a fundamental shift in our voucher system, from a failing schools approach to an income-based approach. The House plan ends the failed schools' model, putting in place a voucher system that prioritizes low-income students, with the poorest students getting top priority. As superintendents, we are having a difficult time understanding why only 5 percent of districts were impacted by EdChoice a year ago, and moving forward it would be more than 70 percent. That is not an expansion of a clearly understood program that is working well; it is simply an attempt to undermine public education.

If the state is going to issue vouchers, the state should pay for them, not use some sort of shell game to prop them up with locally-voted property taxes. The deduct method to fund performance-based EdChoice is

fundamentally flawed. Taxpayers do not approve levies so students can attend their own personally-selected private school.

We would like to add comment on the failed charter schools' movement. When evaluated on a level playing field, charter schools continue to pale in comparison to our public schools. On average, it's not even close. In reality, our public schools are better than they've ever been. That doesn't mean continuous improvement isn't necessary, but drastic attacks that further encourage failing charters is bad for Ohio.

Lastly, there is a substantial unintended consequence from the expanded EdChoice Program. It is creating an extremely adverse relationship between our parochial schools and our public schools. Historically, these two entities have had a solid working relationship, even amidst the turbulent extra-curricular environment. Now, however, these relationships are being destroyed on a daily basis through targeted EdChoice recruiting, and will have devastating consequences on our public/private relationships, negatively impacting Ohio students.

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