

Education Subcommittee
House Bill 9 Testimony
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Good Morning, Chairman Jones, and Conference committee members on House Bill 9.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about the current proposal outlined in House Bill (HB) 9.

My name is Sally Green, I am the Vice-President of Tuscarawas Valley Local School Board in Tuscarawas County. In addition to representing the Board, I also wish to speak on a parent's perspective on public education and the redirection of funds to private and parochial schools.

I have been on the school board for 15 years in Ohio. Like many other school leaders in this room I have devoted my personal life to supporting public schools both for my children and all children in Ohio. The Ohio Supreme Court has ruled four times that the current school-funding system process is unconstitutional.¹ I have for 15 years believed our government would fix this issue but finally I can't sit by at home anymore and watch the slow dismantling of our Public school system. On January 13, 2020 our school board made the unanimous decision to oppose "any funding programs, vouchers or otherwise, that have the effect of diverting public tax dollars from public schools to private/parochial schools." It has to stop!

I would like to provide insight from our local school district's perspective on how the provisions of HB 9 will adversely impact the quality of education and services provided to the children of school districts like ours. We are a guaranteed funded school and would have or will lose all money associated with vouchers costs. Currently we have five HS students and 2 Elementary school students attending parochial school and we bear the expense of busing them. We do not have any voucher system in place for our school system currently. Under the proposed HB 154 we would have had 2 of our 4 school buildings available for school vouchers. Our Primary and High schools were on "the list" despite exceeding the state average in all tested areas, meeting the highest # of achievement indicators in our county, and was in the top 3rd in the region. How can it be that we were on the voucher

¹ DeRolf vs State 3/24/1997 2000;2001;2002

program? Under HB 9 will we still be on “the list “? I would hope not, but the voucher system was originally created to help students in **severely underperforming schools** have a chance for a better school system. Now the idea among some legislators is to help private/parochial school receive more vouchers. Basing the voucher system on school performance is risky- what if one year there is a bad test score? Will that school be on the voucher system forever? When the school grade improves will the child be sent back to his original school when the voucher is removed? Or will the student get a free voucher for the rest of his school years? HB 9 does not address these questions **THEREFORE IT SHOULD NOT BE SUPPORTED!** It has been stated by OSBA, BASA, and Ohio Teachers Association that the current A-F grading system is flawed. You all should be aware of this by now. Therefore there should not be any voucher based on school performance or at least no increase change from the current law of 10%. SB 89 has recognized the need to end the awarding of performance based vouchers. HB 9 is still requesting for more schools to be placed on the list. **There should not be vouchers granted for anyone based on school performance until an equitable and fair grading of test scores can be made.**

Another issue our school district has with HB 9 is to increase the threshold up from the 200% to 300%. Again SB 89 is increasing only to 250%. Both of these bills will cost our government millions. HB 9 allows the 30 million one-time reimbursement to districts affected. Where are these districts to “come up with the money the rest of the years?” and by sharp increase in the income-based eligibility the state will pay out tens of millions of dollars for private tuition rather than improving Public schools with money that the Supreme Court says is required. Have you done any scientific testing to prove that the voucher system is an improvement for our children? Does all that money going to Private and Parochial school go to educate the students? We know that traditionally private school teachers make on average \$10,000 less than public schools. So where is the money going? Again no accountability. Is it lining the owner’s pockets? Providing lobbyist and campaign funds of legislators? Should private schools be allowed to make money off the students? State Audits should be made on all schools requesting money **before** granting even more money to them.

As a parent I have had two children who went through our Ohio public school system and also an English public school. During this time our children were in 4 school districts Marlinton, West Alexandria, Tuscarawas Valley, and Nickolas Hawksmoor Nhants England and 7 different school buildings. My husband and I have always chosen public schools over private schools even though we could have sent them to private schools. We have always supported and believed in the quality

of public education our children would and did receive. We had two primary reasons for our choice of public schools: 1. Diversity and 2. Accountability

The first reason was of the diversity public schools provided. Public schools take ALL STUDENTS- NO MATTER OF RACE, SOCIAL BACKGROUND, ABILITY TO LEARN. 9/10 students go to Public schools-**no child is denied entrance for any reason** – that can't be said of the private/parochial schools. No child is left behind in public schools. Behaviors/mental health students can cost a school district \$ 78,000 while only receiving \$15,000. Will private or parochial schools allow entrance to these students? Our children learned so much from the interaction of different social, or economic classes. They learned to socialize and interact with IDEA students. They learned kindness in thought and action for all people. Can you say private and parochial schools provide the same diversity? Are they not just a different form of segregation? Is there any data that is available to the criteria each private and parochial school uses to allow entrance into their schools? Do they have bias on their entrance standards? Are these schools better at educating students as recent proponents of private education has stated? The answer is NO!! The research has stated *“There was no evidence to suggest that low-income children or children enrolled in urban schools benefited more from private school enrollment, when you examine sample reflects aboard range of economic conditions cultural beliefs, and childrearing practices.”*² Furthermore *“We find no evidence for policies that would support widespread enrollment in private schools, as a group, as a solution for achievement gaps associated with income or race.”*³ SECCYD study contained observations in first, third, and fifth grades across public and private school classrooms detected virtually no differences in qualities of instruction, teacher-student interaction, or delivery of content, even without adjusting for the students' family income levels⁴

² Robert C. Pianta, Arya Ansari, “Does Attendance in Private Schools Predict student Outcomes at Age 15?” SAGE July, 2018.

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⁴ Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development-“**Public and Private Schools: Do Classroom Processes Vary by School Type?**” Rachel H. O'Brien and Robert C. Pianta; *The Elementary School Journal*; Vol. 110, No. 3 (March 2010), pp. 409-419

The second reason in our family decision was public schools are accountable to the tax payers and the State. State testing and audits are performed regularly. Can you say that about private and parochial schools? Private schools and parochial schools do not answer to the state or its requirements or mandates. They are asking for money with no accountability. Where is the proof you may ask. I can answer in one word **E-cot**.⁵ Never in HB 9 is there accountability of these schools- or checks and balances. Do they take the same tests as public schools? Where are their state report cards? Are you going to allow them to take the money and run like E-cot? **Our** children received quality education- 21st century learning, small classrooms, and experienced teachers, something many private schools say public schools do not have. In the book, "[The Public School Advantage](#), " the study in mathematics, found public school students outperform private school students."⁶

In conclusion I would respectfully request to stress once more: the final solution should be based on no expansion of income-based vouchers and remove all school performance vouchers. Investigate and evaluate Private and parochial schools before allowing them more money. While our school board is opposed to all school voucher bills, -SB89 is an overall better bill that closest meets our request. This concludes my testimony. I thank you for your time and consideration.

⁵ **"The GOP's Biggest Charter School Experiment Just Imploded: How a washed-up lobbyist built a charter school empire and siphoned millions from public schools."** James Pogue, Mother Jones ; March/April 2018

⁶ [The Public School Advantage](#) Christopher and Sarah Lubienski, 2013 University of Chicago Press.