

Dear Chair Jones,

We just wanted to take a moment to let you know the benefit ed choice has been to our family. We currently have 2 high school students at Hamilton Freshman Campus and Hamilton High school. They both graduated from Immanuel Lutheran school. Our 3 youngest children are at Immanuel Lutheran school in Hamilton Ohio.

My husband and I would love to see a compromise that benefits public and private schools considering we have children in both.

We love school choice but would like to find a way to make that possible without crippling the local public school. If there were a choice, we would have to err on keeping school choice available.

Classroom size, environment and a Christian foundation and values were very important to our family. We love the small, family atmosphere that we found at Immanuel Lutheran. Our kids participated in retreats, early band, rowing and various sport opportunities.

We have also encountered great principals, teachers and administrators at our public high school as well.

The complaint I have is not so much with the public school as it is with some of the student body and parents.

We have quite a large student ratio of low income families. Low income is not a crime but the affects of it and the amount of broken or one parent family homes has certainly impacted the students and come with a host of social ills.

My oldest daughter had to have two no contact orders issued on two young men at her school. She has been sexually harassed and touched. Sometimes she hasn't even known who it was because of the sheer volume of students. One other time, she and others did help get a student expelled for a bit. She has encountered threats, fights and all around toxic behavior. Safety has been a great concern of ours.

There are quite a number of what I would consider high risk youth. Drugs have certainly been an issue, not to mention fights.

Butler county is rich in resources for mental health because there is a great need. However, a recent mental health and safety levy failed. Both of my kids have taken surveys and left feedback that do not feel safe.

I am very aware of the amount of time that administrators have to use on behavior management and intervention.

I have to say that there are pros and cons to both private and public schools.

I am still thankful that my youngest kids have not been thrown into public school as of yet. The smaller private school has to deal with behavior as well, but not nearly as much as the public school system.

There has certainly been diversity at the private school and more so because of the scholarships. It is my understanding that 1/3 of the Immanuel students are on scholarships. The student body receives great one on one care and and instruction that has been invaluable. There is a great deal of emphasis on character training as well. Positive student and teacher relationships are common, even after graduation.

I just ask that you consider a plan that still allows school choice but hopefully does not take money from public schools, if possible.

I believe in both private and public schools but having an option other than public school is critical to many families. I hope for a great solution to this dilemma. Thank you for taking the time to read this email, I realize it is quite lengthy. We appreciate your service.

Respectfully, Shane and Jody Anderson.