

Charlie: Good evening, my name is Charles Smialek and I am the Superintendent of the Parma City Schools. We are a First Ring district of Cleveland, serving the cities of Parma, Parma Heights, and Seven Hills. Our current enrollment is 9,675, 46% of them from economically disadvantaged districts.

Amanda: Good evening, my name is Amanda Karpus, and I am a member of the Parma Board of Education. We have come to speak to you this evening in support of Senate Bill 89 and will outline our reasons for our position.

Charlie: First, we oppose any classification of our schools for EdChoice eligibility or any other program, initiative, or "list" based upon our state report card. We are most opposed to the use of Value-Added grades to determine the efficacy of schools. Ohio's reliance on this witch's brew of calculations is fundamentally flawed given that the calculations lack transparency, consistency, and often, logic. The value-added model was originally proposed as a method to gauge student progress. If students made one year's growth, regardless of their overall scores, schools would attain satisfactory Value-Added grades. In our district, this does not seem to hold true. Our performance index has increased each of the last three years; this indicator shows that students overall are performing better on Ohio State Tests. Despite these increases, our overall Value-Added grade last year was an "F." Logic would hold that our grade would be at least average: how can students be performing better on exams yet not make one year's progress?

It is extremely difficult to explain this phenomenon given the incredibly intricate method the state's vendor, North Carolina based SAS uses for its calculation. Searching the ODE website for explanation leads to a 54-page statistical model that includes such phrases as "Note that C in equation (16) is not the same as C in equation (4). This matrix is estimated using the Expectation Maximization algorithm for estimating covariance matrices in the presence of missing data provided by the Multiple Imputation procedure in SAS/STAT® (although no imputation is actually used)." Data to assess the quality of schools should be easy to understand, predictable, and transparent. Value-Added calculations meet none of these qualities.

Amanda: Despite the confusing, illogical nature of Value-Added methodology, it is this grade that has placed eight of our 14 schools onto the current list of eligible students for next school year. We find this to be extremely unfair as the same measures do not apply to the schools to which our funds are being transferred. In our district, Padua High School has received more than \$900,000 in public funding yet we have no way of knowing what Value-Added grade Padua may have earned. It is at least possible, if not likely, that Padua and other schools receiving state funds through EdChoice vouchers would have achieved the same grades for which our schools are "punished" and branded as failing.

This year, our district lost over \$2.1 million dollars to EdChoice funding. Ultimately, we cannot sustain such losses and, anytime we are forced to reduce programming to balance our budget, extracurriculars such as athletic and arts opportunities are the first victims of our state-imposed

ax. These are the very opportunities that position us as the fulcrum of our communities' hope for our children. We support Senate Bill 89 because it will end the state's reliance on report cards, and flawed measures such as the Value Added witch's brew to determine eligibility. Further, relying upon state funds, instead of our district's revenue to pay for vouchers will enable us to continue to provide inspiring, dynamic opportunities to our 9,675 children.