

Dear Chairman Don Jones and members of the House Bill 9 Conference Committee:

My name is Clyde Piatt, I am a parent of a freshman student at Westerville South High School. I've been an active PTO member since he started elementary school and active with many levy campaigns, recently as Treasurer for Our Community Our Schools supporting the levy. Our district, Westerville City Schools, is an excellent district with so many opportunities for students to thrive.

Some think Westerville South parents need to receive vouchers as for example my son's school was on the failing school list. The measures are flawed, severely flawed. The teachers, staff and administrators are in fact excellent educators and the opportunity there for students is exceptional. The education my son is receiving is of the highest quality and he is already well prepared to enter college.

Westerville educators know what our children need to succeed and provide opportunities to our students to earn a top quality education. Our schools have 99% pass the third grade reading tests yet many elementary schools failed due to measures applied. This makes no sense.

Vouchers for those who may attend Westerville schools are unnecessary and taking locally voted funds and diverting these funds to private schools is unjustified. If a parent chooses to have a religious education rather than a public education, the state funding is withheld from the public school, having local funding diverted is unconscionable. The public schools educate all including those with the most demanding needs. The local funding supports all even those with behavioral or academic challenges that a private school may decline to enroll.

I support local funding in addition to state funding. The state taking that local funding without a local vote seems to invalidate the reason those vote yes for local public school levies.

As we all want the best for all children, we must not use local approved funding taken from excellent schools to provide funding to schools that do not have similar requirements for financial accountability and requirements to educate any that wish to enroll.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my thoughts on this important issue.