

To Whom It May Concern:

Over the last several months, I have witnessed a constant attack on private schools by our local public school district. The district has used slander and various forms of propaganda to spread a message to kill the legislation that would afford a private education to so many students within our community, misinforming the public about how EdChoice will destroy their financial outlook, even though it would impact about one percent of their operating budget while attacking private school educators as undereducated, unaccountable, and incapable of providing the quality education that students can receive within their buildings.

Fortunately, I have been the beneficiary of relationships with students from these low-income backgrounds that the public school isn't interested in building relationships with, as they continue to focus on the Traditional EdChoice, which would take their highest performers from their schools, as they turn a blind eye to the Expansion-based EdChoice plan. I have seen kids come from broken homes to become unlikely leaders. I have seen kids with nothing give everything they have to their academics and their peer relationships. I have seen kids with no foundation of self-worth discover that they are loved by their teachers, their classmates, and, most importantly, by God.

We tend to listen to the public versus private debate as one that must be determined by the separation of church and state. Instead, we need to afford choice to families to determine where their child would be most successful. The way that the public schools continue to fight this bill is to say that parents are incapable of determining what is best for their child. I've seen children fail in public settings who then come to us and soar. Children and families are not puppets to ensure that administrators and teacher unions get what keeps pockets lined and jobs safe. It isn't child-centered to demand students to attend a school that isn't a fit.

Immanuel Lutheran School has continued to blossom under the income-based EdChoice program. It doesn't have anything to do with the economic uptick for the school - it has everything to do with the love and support of the whole child - academics and faith-based growth - and how a community of believers and educators can bring life and hope to an entire family, but, especially, to the child.

Enhancing this program doesn't take away from public schools, it adds to the community, it adds to the families, and it adds to the individual students. Enhancing EdChoice is needed to ensure that students have the opportunity to find an environment that challenges them and encourages them to find the best of who they can become. This program has to become bigger, for both income-based plans and struggling districts, to ensure that parents can determine what is best for their children.

Stop listening to the propaganda of failing finances, unaccountable private schools, and unfair assessments. Those same schools and districts didn't have any problem losing low-income families, and they were behind the creation of the same assessment methods that they are now saying are unfair. Expansion of all of these programs is what is best for families in Ohio. It should never come down to the financial repercussions of the same districts that pay administrators a quarter of a million dollars - good stewardship isn't just something that is biblical.

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Thank you,

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