

Joint Conference Committee Testimony
February 19, 2020

My name is Megan Picott and I am both a 5th grade math teacher in Sylvania Schools, completing my 20th year as an educator, and a mom of a freshman at Toledo Technology Academy in the Toledo Public Schools.

I have two hats that I wear each and every day. I want to start off by putting on my “teacher” hat. When I went into education, I never expected to be in a position where I could use my educator voice for an important topic such as vouchers.

I wanted to teach.
I wanted to nurture.
I wanted to inspire.

Every day in my classroom I do TEACH, I do NURTURE, I do INSPIRE, but I have also discovered that I have a voice. A voice that knows when it is time to step up and fight for the students I have the privilege of educating.

I get to teach, nurture, and inspire because I work in an amazing school. We have phenomenal educators, administrators, support staff, families, and most importantly, students, who make our school the best place to be. The school I teach in has now been deemed a “failing” school. We are far from “failing”. We are a school where children are engaged. We are a school where children feel safe. We are a school where children feel loved. I am saddened to see that myself and other teachers in our building, who work tirelessly to create engaging, higher-level lessons for our students are being categorized as part of these “failing” schools simply based on **one day** in a child's life. **One day** that could have started out for some of our students with no dinner or breakfast after they left school the previous day or no parent home to get them ready in the morning. **One day.**

Now let me put my “Mom” hat on. I now want to speak to you from the heart of a mom who has a son that has had a wonderful education in an urban school district. My son has been a Toledo Public Schools student ever since he was in kindergarten. He is now a freshman and has had loving, caring, compassionate teachers that have helped my husband and myself as parents raise a wonderful young man. He has had the opportunity to attend classes at his high school that challenge him in not only his core subject areas, but also robotics and pre-engineering. That being said, in his district,

there are currently 34 Toledo Public Schools that are on the EdChoice list and once updated, 7 more schools will be added, bringing the total to 41.

When my son finishes high school, in 2023, Toledo Public Schools stands to lose over \$63,000,000 in local taxes, which will affect not only my son, but every child in his district. Students who need additional support in the area of academics will not be afforded the services they need to be successful. Students who need additional support in the area of mental health services will not have the services they need in order to navigate their daily emotional needs. Students who need a variety of higher level classes will not have opportunities they deserve in order to be competitive with other students in our area. These services are going to be taken away from the students who so desperately need them solely based on a flawed state report card that is a snapshot of one day in a child's life. **One day.**

One day that private schools students are not judged on like public school students.

With these vouchers, private schools will take tax payers dollars away from public school students and do not receive a state report card showing how their students are performing in comparison to public schools around the state. How is it possible to compare schools to each other when not all schools are held to the same scrutiny and standards?

I want to thank you for allowing me to speak today and I urge you to think about how it would feel if you were judged by **one day.**