

Written Statement: Sue Messinger, Parma Education Association
Wednesday, February 19, 2020 5:00 p.m.

Good evening. My name is Sue Messinger. I'm a 7th grade teacher with the Parma City School District and President of the Parma Education Association. I'm speaking today on behalf of our 760 certified Association members who teach the over 9,000 students of Parma City Schools, and in support of Senate Bill 89 as passed by the Ohio House. Senate Bill 89 is geared toward correcting injustices caused by the EdChoice voucher program. EdChoice is unjust on many levels including the fact that it's based on the state's flawed report card system, and also on how it funnels more money away from Public Schools in order to fund the program.

In Parma, that means two schools out of 14 were deemed failing this year, and next year 8 out of 14 are classified that way. It also means a loss of over \$3 million dollars by the end of the 2020-21 school year. This loss will make it more difficult for us to ensure reasonable class sizes and the availability of up-to-date resources, and much needed services for our students, 46% of whom are economically disadvantaged. It will create more stress trying to pass levies to make up for the shortfall when it's already a big challenge to do so in our community. Providing choice to some who have never chosen to be Parma City School students is unfair and is at the expense of our own Public School students.

Any education reform should be guided by the goal of student achievement, and the voucher system has not shown that it has improved student performance. I support Senate Bill 89 as passed by the House because it moves toward awarding new vouchers based on family income, and it would fund those vouchers by the state rather than deducting aid from our public schools.