

Chairman Jones and Members of the House Bill 9 Conference Committee,

Thank you for affording me the opportunity to speak with you today regarding Ohio's EdChoice Voucher program. Earlier this week, you heard from our charismatic superintendent, Marlon Styles, and from a very dedicated novice teacher, Ellen Hart. My name is Terri Vincent and I came to share my perspective as a veteran teacher about how HB89 will create meaningful education reform for public schools-the very cornerstone of education. I am a proud public school educator of 20 years, and my husband, a public school educator of 25 years. Our children 12, 14, and 17 all attend Lakota Local Schools (one of the largest public school districts in Southwestern Ohio), a district that, under the current flawed report card system, has 8 schools that are deemed "failing". As educators ourselves, my husband and I have high expectations and couldn't be happier with the education our children have received. The opportunities afforded to them have been formative to say the least. My daughter, Evie, at just 11 years of age participated in a "Chopped Jr." competition in the culinary center at her elementary school, thus fostering her love for cooking. Both of our sons, Mitchell and Max, have decided to pursue future opportunities to study wealth management after being inspired in their Freshman financial literacy class, that incorporates the Dave Ramsey curriculum. These are just a few of the many examples that demonstrates that Lakota Schools are not failing my children, nor anyone else's. On the contrary, they're inspiring them.

Change in public education is essential and inevitable. We are under the microscope now more than ever. We are not opposed to accountability, as it drives performance. Yet in order to be effective, we need the support of parents, community, and state government. We need to know that you believe in us and will continue to invest in us. I am in support of HB89, a plan to close the equity and opportunity gap. One that ends the failed schools model and moves to an income based approach, prioritizing the neediest children. In education, we use the term, "school ready". Kids who are "school ready" come to school ready to learn, who have families who value and support education, and students who at times, even begin the school year knowing the majority of the curriculum for that grade level. These students would most likely be successful in any educational environment. I'm here tonight to speak on behalf of the other 80%, the same students that HB9 was aimed to support, will be the ones most negatively impacted. Here's MY TRUTH...I teach some of the neediest children in Butler County in the Middletown City Schools District. We are a proud district with 6, 300 students, many of whom live below the poverty line. They certainly deserve equity, as many of them have experienced more trauma in their young lives, than is fathomable. As a result, many of these children come to school with a lot of baggage. My homeroom of twenty 4th graders has as much diversity as it does personality. My students possess a multitude of interests and abilities. I have readers that range from 2<sup>nd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. I have three students who have special education plans, one on a behavior plan. Two who are English language learners, one with severe anxiety, one who is homeless, and several that live with extended family members after losing one or both parents to addiction. *Despite the challenges*, I am accountable for their education, as I should be. It is not a charge that I take lightly. *Despite these challenges*, we have had many successes. Most recently, I am proud to share that based on our NWEA Winter MAP assessment, 90% of our 4<sup>th</sup> graders are on track to make at least 1 years growth this school year and 56.3% of them are on track to make 1.5 years growth. Ariauna (see below), who lives with grandmother, after losing both of her parents, grew 21 points in reading on her winter MAP assessment, Abigail (see below), one of my students with special needs, grew 25 points in reading on her winter MAP assessment! Maricelys, one of my English Language learners has grown (5 reading levels) since the

beginning of the school year. By no means do I consider these failures, yet huge successes! As so many educators do, I take great pride in my teaching. I know my students' strengths and weaknesses as learners. I develop lessons based on their learning styles. I differentiate lessons based on ability and interest. I'm currently working on my ISTE certification, so I can better utilize technology to enhance learning and to give students shared learning experiences locally and globally. Can you promise that you will allow me to continue to do this type of work with my students?

Our district has utilized money provided to us through tax dollars for imperative training, including best practices in education, coupled with strategies for social/emotional support, including implicit bias training, and poverty simulation, so we can provide quality, personalized learning that our students so desperately need. Our job is not easy, yet we work tirelessly to break the cycle of poverty, by providing students the necessary counseling and by hosting family and community events to foster a joint approach to educating our students. We provide students with learning opportunities that inspire and foster curiosity such as our STEM curriculum in our state of the art MakerSpace area, where students work with robots, while others use Green Screen Technology to serve as a meteorologists, pointing out weather patterns. Students enjoy the opportunity to learn about nutrition by growing vegetables in our outside garden space. Last month, Middletown Schools partnered with local businesses for a window decorating contest to show how we love our city. Our students, inspired by muralist, Goldcrown, used his heart murals as inspiration for their display. These successes are just a few of many, but are a much truer representation of our accomplishments, than a letter on a state report card. We, public schools, can do this, but not with a flawed accountability system, criticism, and fewer resources, but with your support. I am here today as a mother of three, a public educator, and a tax payer and I implore you, when making your decision, please consider the other 80% and vote for HB89. The reality is HB89 will lessen the gap between the "haves" and the "have nots", instead of leaving many students, like mine, in public schools with *less* support and *fewer* resources. Thank you for allowing me to share my testimony today. My classroom door is also open to you. I am happy to take your questions.



Ariauna



Abigail



Maricelys