

Good Evening Committee Members,

My name is Trey Rischmann and I am the proud principal of Struble Elementary in the Northwest Local School District. Northwest Local is the second largest public school district in Hamilton county and currently enrolls around 9,000 students. I have served as a teacher and administrator for the past 18 years. As a long-time educator, I stand before you tonight with great concerns about the recent changes regarding EdChoice and the stress it will put on public education and the additional challenges it brings in educating the youth of our community.

As I think about the groundwork that my staff and I are laying to ensure that our students are prepared to one day be engineers, lawyers, machinists, power plant operators, software architects, and most importantly contributing citizens, I can't help but feel uncertainty when I think about how EdChoice will thwart the efforts of not only my school, but public schools across the state of Ohio's ability to prepare students for their tomorrows.

The legislative changes recently made in House Bill 166 are detrimental to the financial stability of public schools. The financial impact that it will cost my District alone is \$16 million dollars over the next four years. (Pause) **\$16 million dollars.**

We strive every day to meet the varying needs of our 950 kindergarteners through fifth grade students. As you know, the students of today face challenge's we never experienced, and now our legislators are adding to their challenges by taking money out of the public school system that has been put in place to help them.

Last year, we had a 4th grader who had behavior concerns with disrespect, refusing to work, and interrupting the class. He wrote thoughts in his journal about self-harm. He was hospitalized for suicidal comments and behavior. Our counselor worked with the case worker from the hospital to come up with a safety plan for when he returned to school. We met as a team to implement the support he needed that would allow our student to thrive. This school year, the same young boy, is excelling. He has turned his days around and has qualified for gifted services. Next year, he will move on to middle school. Our staff is already working diligently to create a transition plan for when he matriculates to 6th grade.

The current legislative changes stated in House Bill 166 give private schools the autonomy to make decisions on what children they educate and the ability to turn away those who struggle to stay afloat. However, our staff is dedicated to helping every student who walks through our doors, regardless of their test scores, their trauma, their families' income, or their behavior. Our dedication to our students is positively changing their lives for the better.

Struble Elementary was on the Ed Choice list prior to this year. 17 students out of 900 took advantage of this scholarship. We are showing tremendous improvements, however, these students will remain on their EdChoice scholarships at our district's expense if things don't change. Public tax dollars should not pay for private school tuition. My parents did not support our last levy last year, for 7.5 mills to have their money given to private schools. We make a difference with all students and do not discriminate who we serve based upon religion, race or special needs.

I support SB 89 because it doesn't take away our public school funds that our taxpayers voted for. If EdChoice is approved the private schools should be held to the same rules and regulations that go with

the public school dollars. Private schools aren't required to take the state assessments, hire highly qualified staff, and do not have a flawed report card system. We support any plan that ends the failed schools model, (based on a flawed report card system), for vouchers and moves to an income-based approach that prioritizes low-income kids, with the neediest kids getting top priority. This was the original intent of School Choice in Ohio. The failed schools model has produced an inaccurate system that says more than 40 percent of our school buildings are underperforming. This shows our accountability system has failed.