

Good evening.

My name is Alyse Consiglio. I am the parent of two girls, 3rd and 4th graders. I was a junior high teacher in a public school for 11 years, a curriculum & instruction supervisor at Trumbull County Educational Service Center for 3 years, and now in my 3rd year as principal at John F. Kennedy Catholic School, Upper Campus, which serves 316 students in grades 6-12. I am an advocate of school choice.

Each school district is different. Some schools are large, providing numerous opportunities for clubs, sports, and electives; some schools are small, providing for more personalized instruction and more opportunity for an individual student to get involved in a variety of activities. Not every school is the right fit for every child. Former US Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings said, "School choice gives you more opportunities to achieve your expectations for your child." The EdChoice scholarship is a way that makes Kennedy one of those choices for some families. I believe it is important to follow through with the promise of expanding school choice, a result of the EdChoice eligible buildings published in November.

In 1988, my own parents exercised their right to school choice when we moved to a new city. They chose their new residence because they wanted my brother and me to attend that particular school district. Their tax money followed them to the new district. In 2003, my parents again exercised their right to school choice when my brother chose to open-enroll; ironically, at the same school district my parents chose to move from, because of the more extensive science curriculum. The money moved from their district of residence to the district he attended.

All schools in Trumbull County and 83.6% of all districts in Ohio allow open enrollment either to any district or adjacent districts. In 2018, one school district in our county reported a loss of over 200 students and \$610,000 each year because of students open enrolling into other districts. Their parents are choosing what they deem as a better school system and moving funds from one school to another.

The question of accountability-both academically and fiscally- has come up when moving taxpayer funds to a private school, such as Kennedy.

- We have been open since 1964, producing amazing alumni that have made a positive impact on society. Among our graduates, we count a US Congressman, Ohio State Representative, blockbuster filmmaker, nationally syndicated radio show host, one of the nation's top-ranked franchisees, and countless others who are contributing to the success of Ohio and beyond.
- We have a 100% 4-year graduation rate.
- 98% of our students move to higher education or military service. We have specialized programs like MedPREP, for students interested in careers in health services and Entrepreneurship, giving students authentic learning experiences running a small business. Our curriculum includes computer science and 3D printing to Literature Workshop to Global Affairs. We offer visual and performing arts, speech and debate, and community service opportunities. We develop well-rounded students that are college and career ready.
- Our students take and pass the ODE Alternative Assessment test for graduation. We use the Iowa Assessments. The Iowa assessments are tests that measure students' skills in reading, language, math, social studies, and science. They cannot be "studied for" or "taught to". 100% of our current seniors have accumulated the number of quality points needed for graduation as set by the ODE for their scores on these tests.

- I meet monthly with Warren City Schools Director of Federal Funds to report how federal Title funds are spent.
- Our district is audited yearly by an independent auditor, with reports to the Board of Directors and Diocese of Youngstown.
- I meet with all transfers into Kennedy to talk about their experience. As a private school, we ARE graded, by our retention rate. If parents don't think we are doing a good job, they leave. It is important to talk to our students and see where we can improve their experience.
 - Almost 100% of the time, rigor and pace of academics is the number one challenge of transfers from public schools. "We have to learn the material deeper. The pace is much quicker. We don't just practice for the test".

I am a taxpayer, just like the parents of students in my school. Their taxes and my taxes go to the public school district we each reside in. The majority of parents do not have the choice of their taxes to go to the school they have chosen for their students. Vouchers are not "stealing funds" but allocating funds for a specific student to attend the school of his or her family's choice.

From previous testimony in the news, I heard the analogy that went something like: "If Starbucks is failing, they don't pull all their money and give it to Dunkin Donuts. They invest it in making Starbucks better". The missing piece here is that consumers aren't forced to patronize Starbucks. Consumers have their choice of where to spend their money. They take into account the quality of the product and their loyalty to the brand. As a legislature, it is your job to make funding for public schools available. As a parent, it should be my right to allocate funding where my children's schooling is concerned.

One of my students said he likes attending Kennedy because, "when you go out in public and wear Kennedy attire, people immediately know what you stand for". Academic excellence along with our school motto of Courage, Integrity, and Dedication. Our families choose Kennedy after thoughtful consideration because it is the best match for the gifts their children have. Middle-class families, paying taxes, should be given the choice of where their taxes are being used when they have school-aged children. Those families should be given what they were promised in November at the very least. They have the choice of any public school through open enrollment. Kennedy should also be a choice by the expansion of the EdChoice scholarship next year and beyond.