

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns about proposed changes to the EdChoice program. My husband and I have two children who attended Columbus City Schools through their elementary years and though they had phenomenal teachers-which has never been in question here-the state of public schools caused their last two years there to be very traumatic. Extreme behavioral outbursts where they would have to close hallways for student safety or give the students IN their classroom a "Safe Zone" for when there was an "Episode" with a violent student who was flipping desks, throwing staplers, ripping things off the walls, trying to harm the teacher or other students...and this was just the elementary level. Our options for Middle School and High School are even worse. Weapons brought into school regularly, drugs brought even more often, gang fights at football games, no air conditioning...Yes, we DO deserve better for our children. We deserve EdChoice due to the performance of our local school. We are the epitome of a middle class family who makes just above the threshold to qualify for low income on the HIGH end currently being proposed, but we are not financially able to spend \$15,000+ per year for our children to continue to attend their wonderful Private Schools. They were not prepared for the entrance exam to their private schools when they left the public school even though they were straight "A+" students there, they had to play catch up to succeed in their private school due to the lack of education received in 5th grade in their public school in most subjects. They are now ahead of their peers in public schools in every subject and are able to focus in a calm and positive environment without someone being put in a safety hold in front of them or worrying about being injured by a student's extreme outburst. Public Schools need to be fixed. Money isn't going to solve many of the biggest problems. All of us stuck in Districts that are failing deserve options. Columbus is HUGE and the vast majority of their buildings are on the failing list and have been for a very long time. The district as a whole has been failing for as long as I have paid attention to the State Report Cards(10 years at least), we are talking all F's and D's with that occasional "C" for focusing on the K-3rd grade level because of the third grade reading guarantee. The State Education system is failing our children and if you take away EdChoice you are adding to that problem because our children will never set foot in those schools, so you will not receive money for them anyway. That means two bright, social, amazing students will be forced into home schooling. Please keep EdChoice Vouchers Performance Based and fix the broken grading system and public schools as a whole so people don't feel the need to remove their children in the first place. Thank you for your time.

Amber Hughes