

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: February 20, 2020

Name: Bob Scott

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable): Avon Lake City School District

Position/Title: Superintendent

Address: 175 Avon Belden Rd.

City: Avon Lake State: OH Zip: 44012

Best Contact Telephone: 440-933-6210 Email: robert.scott@avonlakecityschools.org

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): HB 9

Specific Issue: Ed Choice Vouchers

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? Written Testimony Only

Please provide a brief statement on your position:

SEE TESTIMONY

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.

AVON LAKE CITY SCHOOLS

175 Avon Belden Road
Avon Lake, Ohio 44012
www.avonlakecityschools.org



Board of Education

James A. Stobe, President
Pamela Ohradzansky, Vice President
Dale W. Cracas
Ronald D. Jantz Jr.
Michael P. Sherban

Superintendent

Robert D. Scott
440.933.6210
440.933.6711 fax

Treasurer

Autumn Reed
440.933.5163
440.933.7540 fax

February 20, 2020

Dear Chairman Jones and Members of the Primary & Secondary Education Committee,

My name is Bob Scott, and I am the Superintendent of the Avon Lake City School District. My education career stands at 41 years (and counting) which includes 11 years as a teacher, 10 years as a building level administrator, and 20 years as a Superintendent of Schools. I have taught and been a building level administrator in Illinois and Texas before becoming a Superintendent of Schools in Ohio in 2000. My experience ranges from an urban school district in Illinois, a rural district in Texas to suburban and Appalachia school districts in Texas and Ohio.

Our experiences mold us all and mine has helped me to continue to grow as an educator. The world and education have changed tremendously since I started teaching in 1978, but the goal for students hasn't varied – *Give everyone the knowledge and skills needed to live a productive life.* The key word has been and always will be *"everyone."*

This letter is intended to be opponent testimony concerning the EdChoice Vouchers. **EdChoice is just the latest issue in a long line of issues that are symptoms of the "core issues" still facing Ohio School Districts. I believe that short-term adjustments (HB 9 or SB 89) may relieve some of the immediate ancillary issues caused by legislation that can only be described as wrong (failing school designations and public tax dollars leaving a school district). Correcting the bigger issues will take time and a great deal of bravery by our legislators. Fixes must be bi-partisan (education should not be held hostage by "money" or "political agendas" or a "Senate, House stare down") and must be focused on the future of the young people of Ohio.**

As a brief aside, please know that I am extremely appreciative of the work that Representative Gayle Manning and Senator Nathan Manning have done on behalf of the children/young men and women of Lorain County and Avon Lake, Ohio. I know that both Gayle and Nathan are politicians and represent their chosen party, but I also know that they are honest and forthright. They listen to and act in the best interest of their constituents, especially students, even if it puts them at odds with their peers. I cannot ask for more.

Avon Lake City School District is one of the high-performing school districts that has an elementary school, Redwood, which is considered a failing school for EdChoice purposes. The failing school designation was given because of an F in overall progress in ELA and Math in the 4th grade. This designation was received despite in 2019 an Overall grade of B, an A in Achievement (109.3 Performance Index), and an A in Gap Closing that same year. Also, in the last five years this school has been designated as a Hall of Fame School by the Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators and has been led by an Ohio National Distinguished Principal (NAESP).

Is Redwood Elementary School a failing school?

No – the Ohio state testing system is flawed. The report card is flawed. Avon Lake City School District will not change how we teach or make changes that we believe will hurt students in the long run in order to get a better grade on the State Report Card. Our historic academic achievements from Pre-Kindergarten through the 12th grade indicate that we continue to prepare students for success after graduation. We will continue to make decisions locally that meet the needs of our students.

(Continued on page 2)

The mission of the Avon Lake City Schools, a district committed to personalized educational excellence, is to challenge all students and develop their individual goals through community partnerships, resources, and technologies which will produce responsible and compassionate citizens.

Is EdChoice about every child having a right to a quality education regardless of their zip code?

No

Is EdChoice about a parent's right to choose?

No

Is EdChoice about money following the student?

No

Is EdChoice about the state testing, report card, and state accountability system?

No

Is EdChoice about good or bad public schools or good or bad non-public schools?

No

I could and would love to answer the above questions, but in all honesty each response would be pages long and it would only "muddy the water." The conversations being held at the hearings this past week are indicative of the "circle talk" that goes on when issues like EdChoice are discussed. EdChoice is not about "choice." It is about money and politics.

I have lived through more cycles of "there is no money and you need to do more with less" rhetoric from legislators than I care to remember. My local stakeholders have continued to support the outstanding educational opportunities we offer all students even when the State failed us. The EdChoice voucher program is another threat to the viability of our district and public schools all across Ohio.

Avon Lake City School District is a capped school district. Avon Lake City School District receives less funding, approximately \$1,000 per student, from the State of Ohio than non-public schools (Fair Funding?). Avon Lake City School District received \$5,000,000 in TTP reimbursement from the State of Ohio just five years ago. Starting in 2018 we received \$0. Charter school funding, CC+, and The Peterson Scholarships all siphon local tax dollars away from Avon Lake City School District students. It has never been "right." EdChoice is another money grab that just makes a system that is broken even more so.

As a parent, as an educator, and as a Superintendent, I continue to be amazed that those who have been given the responsibility to support the public school systems in Ohio are unable to come together for our children. As I said before, EdChoice is just the latest issue. The discussions/hearings going on can be an opportunity to make meaningful changes toward creating the education system that every child deserves.

Sincerely,



Bob Scott
Superintendent
Avon Lake City School District

kas