

Good Afternoon,

My name is Gretchen Farrell and I am writing you today in regards to EdChoice and its pending changes.

I am a product of Catholic Schools. My parents sacrificed for me and my siblings to attend a Catholic grade school and a Catholic high school within the City of Dayton. My three young children are now enrolled at a Catholic grade school in the Dayton area. I have seen first hand the EdChoice system currently in place and its flaws.

My family is not on an EdChoice scholarship; and because of that, we are in the minority at our school. My kids attend a private Catholic school and we pay out of pocket for tuition. It should be mentioned that we do not live in a failing school district (we live in the City of Kettering). We choose to send our children to a Catholic school because of our religious views.

Our childrens school as become dependent on state funds from the EdChoice vouchers. Tuition has been raised, at our school and others in our area, so that the full EdChoice voucher amount can be received. This puts a burden on the non-EdChoice parents, as we are paying more now so that the school can pad its numbers to receive the full amount of EdChoice from the State of Ohio.

One of my children was on an IEP a year ago. The services provided by a Catholic school are not currently sufficient for children with any type of disability. My family was forced to go to a private provider for services, which we paid out of pocket. I fear that with more EdChoice vouchers, children who do not have the means to seek outside therapy or tutoring, will fall through the cracks. How is the State going to make sure that this does not happen?

I am also against the grandfathering in of vouchers for those who currently receive them. Just like any financial aid, these scholarships should be reviewed on a yearly basis and given to those with the most financial need. If someone can afford to pay for private education, and chooses that for their child, they should not take State monies to do so. An income based system with yearly review of recipients seems to be the most economically sound way to run this system.

Since private schools are taking State money, it should also be required of them to provide test scores and financial information to the public. There is fine line between Church and State, but the minute an institution accepts State money there needs to be checks and balances to insure quality of education.

In having three young children, I of course want what is best for ALL children in the area of education. I do not believe that taking funds from public institutions and paying for children who can afford and would be attending private schools anyways is protecting education for ALL children.

I ask that you consider my points above. Thank you for your time.

Gretchen Farrell