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Primary and Secondary Education Committee

### **RE: EDCHOICE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

I am a resident in the Parma City School District. Our oldest son is an 8th grader at St. Charles Borromeo and has been accepted to Padua Fransican High School for the fall of 2020. This was a very important decision our family made, together, for several reasons.

Our children attend Catholic School. This is because our current public school district quite simply is not good enough. A school district, that I graduated high school from, has deteriorated and I felt obligated to my children to do better for them. Our initial decision for Catholic Education was made because the school our oldest was assigned to for kindergarten had a bad reputation for their academics and students. We stopped once to play at the playground on campus and immediately left after finding cigarette boxes and condoms near the play equipment. The school district couldn't guarantee a transfer to another school, so we opted to send our child to a private school. Financially, it is a hardship, but after years of seeing the district's woes, it is worth it. We have two relatives who attend PSCD public schools. They joke about their lack of education, homework, supplies and the weekly fights that they witness. I have spoken to teachers in the district who say the same thing and that there is even gang activity at the junior high. This is terrifying and unacceptable. Forcing my children to attend such schools is a complete disservice to them. Therefore, our choice has been clear.

We have been paying taxes into a school district that our children do not attend. I support every single levy that has been placed on the ballot because I believe in education and good neighborhoods. However, this has been to none of my family's benefit. Now, when my child is ready to go to high school and EdChoice was presented as an option, it is about to be taken away, after APPLICATIONS AND ACCEPTANCES into school. The timing is suspect and unfair. Your obligation to residents is to guide and make solid decisions for the benefit of our children and their education. Poor planning, timing and judgement on your end should not be detrimental to our children's education. The misguided "report card" system that caused this upheaval needs to be addressed and fully investigated in an acceptable manner. Redevelopment of policies, practices and standards need to be fully researched and implemented *prior* to making any decisions. To hastily, and without thoroughly creating a thoughtful and effective action plan, pull the rug out on an existing program is an offense against education in the state of Ohio. Do your research. Resolve the issues. Do this in a reasonable time frame without just stopping a program that many thought was an option. Removing the program or making changes after school decisions have been made is bad policy and shows a lack of truly caring about the education of our children. The fact that you are trying to make changes so late in the process of high school applications is disappointing and a complete failure. Our children should not be made to suffer because of your poor planning. Keep the current EdChoice program for this upcoming school year and do your homework to reestablish an effective program.

