

February 18, 2020

Dear Chairman Jones and members of the house bill 9 conference committee,

I am writing in opposition of Ohio's Educational Choice Scholarship (EdChoice) Program.

My family recently voted to support the local tax levy for Westerville City Schools and was not informed my property taxes would be used to subsidize private tuition. My understanding was the taxes would be used to build additional schools, improve existing structures, invest in security and safety upgrades.

One of our children is enrolled at Columbus Academy and one at the Early Learning Center in Westerville. The ELC is a special needs preschool and our son Drew will attend kindergarten at Mark Twain Elementary School in Westerville in the fall of 2020. Drew has an IEP written by Westerville for speech, sensory processing and autism. Drew needs the resources of the public school system and will learn differently than his brother. I do not agree that resources should be shifted from WCS to private/parochial schools or taken out of the levy that was just passed in November 2019. He would not receive the same support from intervention specialists, speech and occupational therapists that he will receive through the state mandated program that Westerville must follow.

It is concerning that vouchers will be available to numerous families and students who never attended Westerville or any other public schools and for whom state funding has never been provided to Westerville or any other public schools. These private/parochial schools accepting students with public tax vouchers would not be required to accept all students and permitted to retain their selective admission policies without the same standards and laws applicable to public schools. The performance of the private/parochial school subsidized with public tax dollars will not be known relative to the equivalent public school evaluation standards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason A. Buehner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jason A Buehner  
Westerville resident