

The EdChoice Scholarship is important to my family. I had two of my three children in the Middletown City School District from 2016-2019. I carefully watched the state report card released twice a year. Our public school was failing every time. Not just one or two schools, every school in our district! (Middletown City School District) We noticed it also with our children. They were just barely getting by in the classroom. I rarely had homework for them and the expectations set forth were minimal at best. For example, last year I had a second grader at Miller Ridge Elementary. His teacher that year was consistently absent. The school had been notified once that she would be out for awhile. Still, my son had a different substitute every day. At times the school didn't find a substitute and he was forced to sit on the floor in different classrooms, merged with 26 other students, with a clip board in his lap for the whole day. SEVERAL times my second grade son sat in a kindergarten classroom, on the floor, for an entire day. To say this caused chaos in the classroom is an understatement. My son witnessed fighting in his classroom, foul language, and complete disrespect from children and some administration. Both of my children read from books in the classroom with foul language written throughout. There were not any expectations for these students. I voiced concerns several times to the teacher and principal. I met with the principal personally and was met with what felt like a brick wall. My son went from loving school to absolutely despising it. He is a very bright, academically gifted child that thrives on being challenged and tested. (Test scores to prove it). My other son was in kindergarten last year. His classroom was large with quite a few children struggling to learn the curriculum. His teacher had 27 students to teach by herself. He was sent home with workbook pages depicting a star or smiley face from his teacher. Those pages were full of mistakes made by him and not corrected by the teacher. He had letters and numbers consistently wrong and backwards, nothing corrected, and given a big star. When we found out a voucher was offered for our school it was a dream come true! I can assure you we were making plans to enroll in another district and possibly move. We applied and were granted the Ed choice scholarship. I sent my children to a private Catholic School this year and yes we are Catholic so it was my first choice. To say my children have thrived there is an understatement! They are excelling at a tremendous rate. Both boys will tell you they love their new school. My oldest son thanks me for finding him a new school! His teacher recognizes his potential and loves to challenge him. He is a role model in his classroom and enjoys helping the other students. My first grader is doing well also. He is reading on an advanced level and loves math! He has spent this entire year correcting the way he writes his numbers and letters learned from last year. His teacher makes him correct every mistake made! After the first week of school this year they were so excited to tell me the other kids behaved, all day! They couldn't believe it. My oldest son said nobody had thrown anything at him and there hadn't been a desk flipped yet!! I know exactly what is expected from them and the curriculum is tough but met with teachers eager to see their students succeed. They enjoy going to mass and learning their prayers which is another blessing to us. They are being taught morals and held to a high standard. This has all been made possible by the gift of the Ed Choice scholarship. I understand the argument set forth regarding the Ed choice scholarship. I ask you to make changes wisely. There are some schools on that list that probably shouldn't be on there. There are some schools, like mine, that most definitely should be on the list. We don't have a choice with the public school district, outside of moving, but we do have the choice of going private with this scholarship available. I also ask you to not base the scholarship on low income. Please don't take yet another thing from the middle class tax paying citizens. We are middle class raising three children in a failing school district. We can't afford to pay for tuition to the private school in full for all three children. We will be above the cut off you are proposing for the low income voucher. Please consider these children when you are thinking about revoking the scholarship to failing school districts. Once again, the Ed Choice scholarship granted to my children is nothing short of a blessing. I pray you make changes wisely for the children and not the public school administrators rallying against it due to the financial cut back to their schools. Middletown City School district has had schools on the voucher list for years. They have done nothing about it. They

are still failing and continue to get worse. I have not heard from the administrators of our school district regarding this issue. All that I have heard this last month is complaining about the money they are losing, nothing about their failing academics. Changes need to be made but please let me keep the option of sending my children to a better school.

Thank you for your time,

Jessica Haines

Mother of three boys in a failing public school district