

Dear Committee members,

I have been listening to the testimony that has been given during these hearings through the live stream and have been very frustrated by a lot of what I have been hearing. My daughter is a freshman at Padua High School in Parma and we had representatives from the school there yesterday to testify. She is a recipient of the Ed choice scholarship this year based upon the failing school district we live in. From my understanding she would not lose her scholarship going forward as she would be going to Parma High school, which would remain on the list, had we not chose to send her private. When we purchased our home in 2008, we did so knowing that she would always be going to private schools because of the poor school district we lived in. We made that choice when she was 3 years old and would not change a thing about our decision. For her education so far from Kindergarten through 8th grade we have paid out almost \$40,000 in tuition and other fees to our private school all while still paying the city and income taxes that go to benefit our public school that we do not have any students enrolled in. It took many sacrifices on our part to do what was best for our child to get the best education possible and continue to do so as she is in private high school. I have heard many statements from public school educators stating that the report card system is failed. That may be the case but that is not what is up for debate here. What is, is the willful neglect of lawmakers trying to take away scholarships for schools that were added to the list months ago and trying to change the law for what schools qualify. If the report card needs to be changed, then under another law re-write the report card requirements in the future. These schools, parents, and children were told their school is failing and they have the choice to go where they would like and use that voucher at an approved Ed Choice school. They have planned, hoped and dreamed of attending the school they want and you are just trying to take that away.

I also heard many public school administrators commenting that private schools should be held to the same standards of testing that public schools are, yet they also argue that those test scores for their schools are inaccurate leading to false failing grades. You can't have your cake and eat it too. I would challenge them to have their students take the private schools admissions exams and see how they score if you want to make things even. I would also challenge them to adhere to a tighter grading system that is used in private schools and see what your students GPA and pass/fail status would be. We grade on a much tougher scale with a 100-93 being an A, 92-85 a B, 84-77 a C, 76-70 a D and 69 and below an F. Public schools grade 100-90 A, 89-80 B, 79-70 C, 69-60 D, and 59 and below an F. So at a public school you are still getting credit for a class by getting a 69 as a D+, where as you would have failed that class at a private school. If they truly want to even things out lets start there and you will see how many of those kids would fail at a private school.

To address the report card concerns that seem to be so much of the topic here, in a lot of these school districts, you don't need an actual report card. Observe some of these children that attend the public grade schools in Parma walking home after school. There are children constantly getting beat up, bullied not top mention what actually goes on while they are in school. There have been many incidents where K-5 students have been attacked in school by other students and when questioned by the parents the school refuses to do anything about it. On the other side why aren't the parents held responsible when it is their child that is doing the attacking. There is no accountability in Parma schools by the administrators and equally the

parents. Our school district has been on the failing list for a long time and had changed directors as often as we change clothes. They have not been able to balance their books for years and cry poverty and ask for more money every year, yet advertised that they had a 9 million dollar surplus just a couple weeks ago. I think this was a tactic to persuade families from applying for Ed Choice. This district has been mismanaged for years and the state needs to step in and take control or it will never get off any naughty list. It is a very sad statement that teachers that teach at these Parma schools send their children to private schools because they want them to get the best education possible and that is not at the public schools here in Parma.

The other half of the accountability goes on the parents of these students. It is not the schools job to raise your child, it is to educate them. I would challenge parents to ask yourselves how much they were willing to sacrifice to ensure their child got the best education in a supportive environment where their child would feel safe everyday. Would they truly be willing to give up those things. I know I have and would do it again in a heartbeat. I know when my daughter goes to school everyday that she is safe and surrounded by peers that have the same values and morals that we have raised her to have. That goes beyond religion, it is just good parenting raising a good child in this world. They don't even have locks on the lockers at her high school (you can if you want but no one does) because you have a school of 757 students with respect to other peoples property and would not go in them. Could you imagine if that happened in a public school, it would be a free for all? I am not trying to bash all public schools as I have family that teach in other public schools. I am trying to draw attention to the problem that exists within our district and why I would never send my daughter to the public schools here. It is all about choice as it always should be. Even with Ed Choice there is still a financial responsibility that the parents have to commit for their child to go there. Its not free like public school and a choice has to be made about what do you want for your child and what are you willing to do to achieve that for them.

Getting the Ed Choice scholarship this year could not have come at a better time for us. We do not financially fall in the poverty level but are lower middle class. I spent 2 months out of work when the clinic I ran closed after 10 years, this was not expected and was a burden on our family. During that same month, both of our cars that had been paid off for years died and needed to be replaced taking on car payments we hadn't had for 5 years. When we found out we got the Ed Choice scholarship we were overjoyed because it gave us the breathing room while I found another full time job. It also meant that I didn't have to get a second job to cover her tuition which would have been our reality without the scholarship. Again we are not a family that falls under the poverty levels but we are not wealthy either. We scrape by just like most Americans but have always put our child's needs ahead of our own and that's why this scholarship is so important to so many people.

Please consider the families and children in your decision to keep Ed Choice as it stands now. I know it would torture me if I was not able to give my daughter what she was told she could have back in November and try to explain to her how people she has never met want to take that away from her.

Thank you!
Megan Dewey