

WAYNE LOCAL SCHOOLS

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE

WE'RE *small* ENOUGH TO
REALLY KNOW OUR
STUDENTS.
THAT GIVES THEM *BIG*
OPPORTUNITIES.

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November 10, 2017

As Superintendent of Wayne Local Schools in Waynesville, Ohio; I am stating our opposition to Substitute House Bill (Sub. HB) 200

HB 200 creates the Ohio Opportunity Scholarship (voucher) Program, a new statewide program allowing K-12 students to use a voucher to attend private schools

Sub. HB 200 would create a statewide voucher program open to income qualifying students no matter how well their school district of residence performs academically. Not only do we believe Ohio should spend its scarce resources on improving the public school choices for all students, we adamantly oppose public support for private schools that may not do as well as the districts where they're located.

Students from families earning up to 400% of the federal poverty level would qualify for a portion of the voucher amount. This means a family of four earning over \$98,400 per year would qualify.

The bill caps the number of vouchers at 60,000, but with 10% automatic increases based on demand. LSC estimates the cost to be \$48 million and notes that, "the cost of the program will rise, potentially by a significant amount over the long term."

While public schools are accountable to the public for academic results, there is little such information about private schools. Part of allowing "choice" to parents should be the expectation that there are data available on school performance for parents to make an informed choice.

Additionally, even if a student wishes to receive a voucher to attend a given private school, it does not mean they will be accepted or be able to afford their share of tuition. Private schools retain the right to deny admission to students, or screen them out for a variety of reasons.

The program could increase transportation costs for public school districts at the same time that state foundation funding would be reduced due to fewer students attending the public school. School districts are required to provide transportation to nonpublic schools located within thirty minutes of what would otherwise be the nonpublic student's assigned public school. While some state money would offset these costs through the transportation funding formula, state support of school bus transportation was dramatically reduced in this biennium through HB 49.

We are strongly opposed to this legislation and believe the voucher would turn the state's obligation to provide a thorough and efficient "system" of public education into a private benefit, resulting in an unprecedented level of voucher expansion that could impact every school district.

Sincerely,



Pat Dubbs
Superintendent

Patrick Dubbs, Superintendent
Jan Dworetzky, Administrative Assistant