



- Andrews Osborne Academy
- Birchwood School of Hawken
- Canton Country Day School
- Central Montessori Academy
- Cincinnati Country Day School
- Cincinnati Hills
Christian Academy
- Columbus Academy
- Columbus Jewish Day School
- Columbus School for Girls
- Columbus Torah Academy
- Gilmour Academy
- Grand River Academy
- Hathaway Brown
- Hawken School
- Hershey Montessori School
- Hudson Montessori School
- Lake Ridge Academy
- Laurel School
- The Lawrence School
- The Lillian and Betty Ratner School
- Linden Grove School
- The Lippman School
- Mansion Day School
- Marburn Academy
- Maumee Valley Country Day School
- McGuffey Montessori School
- The Miami Valley School
- The New School
- Old Trail School
- Olney Friends School
- Ridgewood School
- Ruffing Montessori School -
Cleveland Heights
- Ruffing Montessori - Rocky River
- The Schilling School for
Gifted Children
- The Seven Hills School
- Summit Country Day School
- University School
- Urban Community School
- Wellington School
- Welsh Hills School
- Western Reserve Academy

House Primary and Secondary Education Committee **HB 34 – Opponent Testimony**

Dan Dodd

Executive Director – Ohio Association of Independent Schools

Chairwoman Manning, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in opposition to House Bill 34 on behalf of the Ohio Association of Independent Schools (OAIS). OAIS is made up of 44 private independent schools throughout the state, the majority of which are accredited by the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS).

The practice of withholding student records or transcripts until there is an agreement reached on the payment of past due tuition is a common practice in private schools. There are several reasons why this is the case. First, it is the least intrusive way for both schools and parents to complete the terms of the enrollment contract that all parties agreed to prior to a student's enrollment. Second, it is the option that will do no permanent damage to a family's financial situation. Third, other options will drive up costs for those families remaining at the school who keep their commitment and pay according to what was agreed to in the enrollment contract.

Our heads of school are not unsympathetic to the issues raised about access to records. Concerns have been raised about access to IEP records: We would certainly share that concern, but as you know, according to federal law, private schools do not create IEPs; those records are with school districts. If the bill's transfer requirement only applied to public schools, we would certainly understand since public school policies on these matters may infringe upon a student's constitutional right to a public education. We are also understanding about a situation where a family is in poverty and cannot afford the fees or tuition incurred, which is why we suggest limiting this relief to those families who would be eligible for the EdChoice Expansion program (250% of FPL). However, the bill does none of these things. It treats every situation the same and paints everyone with same brush, meaning that those who can afford to pay but refuse to do so due to a disagreement with the school over something unrelated to tuition get the same relief as those who may be struggling to make ends meet due to a change in circumstances.

Our organization strongly recommends that the committee take a more targeted approach to this issue and limit the circumstances in which records from a private school have to be sent to a different school. Changes and limits like those mentioned above will provide relief to those who need it and hold accountable those who can pay tuition.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.