



**Ohio Primary and Secondary Education Committee
Testimony Melissa Cropper,
President of the Ohio Federation of Teachers
Proponent Testimony House Bill 407:
May 21, 2024**

hair Manning, Vice Chair Fowler-Arthur, and Ranking Member Robinson. I am Melissa Cropper, President of the Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT). OFT represents teachers in traditional and charter schools, support staff, higher education faculty and staff, social workers, library employees, and other public employees across Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony for HB 407.

With the significant increase in public funding for the Ed Choice Scholarship Program and the Cleveland Scholarship Program, more information and transparency is needed on how public funds are being used in private schools that receive vouchers, which students are utilizing vouchers, and how voucher students are performing in comparison to their public school counterparts. This information, required by HB 407, will give state policymakers solid information to consider when making future decisions about funding private education with public taxpayer dollars. It will also provide transparency to the taxpayers whose money is being spent.

Key provisions of the bill include:

State Expenditure Report: Chartered nonpublic schools will have to meet specific reporting requirements, ensuring that public funds are separately accounted for and transparently managed. This is crucial for maintaining fiscal responsibility and public trust in how public tax dollars are utilized.

State Report Card and a system to compare student performance data: The Department of Education and Workforce will issue a state report card for private schools in which at least 20% of students receive a voucher. The report card should require the same information as required on a traditional public school report card. In addition, the Department of Education and Workforce must establish a system for comparing the performance data of voucher students with the performance of similar students in traditional public schools, charter schools, STEM schools and other public schools, making it easier for parents to access comparative data when making a choice about their child's education.

The state report card will also include additional information such as admission procedure; state expenditure report; and capacity, enrollment, and prior school year attendance. This will provide valuable data to the state for determining who is actually using the scholarships and how the money is being spent.

Elimination of Alternative Assessments: The bill mandates that students in these programs take state assessments, ensuring consistency and comparability in measuring academic achievement in all schools receiving some form of state funding.

Enhanced Admission and Capacity Reporting: Schools will need to establish and report on their admission procedures and capacity limits. This ensures fair access to education and minimizes the potential for discrimination based on disabilities, race, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status. In addition, the bill requires that schools report annually the enrollment status of their students the prior school year, broken down by whether the students were enrolled in that school, a different chartered nonpublic school, a non-chartered nonpublic school, a traditional public school, a charter school, a STEM school, or if the student was homeschooled. This disaggregated information will be useful in determining the educational background of students who are using vouchers.

Maintenance and Transfer of Disciplinary Records: By requiring the maintenance and transfer of student disciplinary records, the bill promotes continuity and safety in student records management, which is vital for student welfare and school administration.

H.B. 407 introduces essential measures that will strengthen the oversight of chartered nonpublic schools that accept public funding through vouchers. In addition, the provisions in this bill will give parents solid data about the education options for their children.

I urge you to support H.B. 407 and the beneficial changes it brings to our educational system.