



The OEA will lead the way for continuous improvement of public education while advocating for members and the learners they serve.

House Bill 407 Proponent Testimony
House Primary and Secondary Education Committee
May 21, 2024

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Fowler Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Scott DiMauro. I am a high school government teacher from Worthington, and it is my honor to serve as President of the Ohio Education Association (OEA). On behalf of the 120,000 members of the OEA, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 407.

I would like to begin by thanking the joint sponsors of this bill, Representatives Manning and Seitz. House Bill 407 will bring additional accountability to private schools that participate in Ohio's voucher programs. With over \$1 billion in public dollars being spent on private school tuition this school year, this added accountability is needed. HB 407 will provide greater transparency for Ohio's taxpayers and more information for parents to make decisions about the options available for their children.

This past December, the OEA's Representative Assembly adopted changes to OEA's legislative policies in support of greater accountability for private schools that participate in state voucher programs. OEA supports policies to require regular audits of private schools accepting vouchers; prohibit discrimination in admissions; require voucher students to take the same state tests as their public school peers; and issue comparable state report cards. While HB 407 does not accomplish all of these in full, it does provide significant progress in the areas of financial transparency and academic accountability. HB 407 represents a measured approach to this issue and is worthy of support from this committee.

OEA supports the following provisions of HB 407:

- Requires schools enrolling voucher students to submit an annual expenditure report to the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) stating how it used state funds;
- Requires schools to include in admission procedures a method to determine which students to admit when capacity is limited;
- Expands reporting requirements for schools with at least 20% of students on vouchers which includes information on enrollment and capacity, number of voucher students enrolled and where they attended the previous year;
- Generally, requires EdChoice voucher students to take the same tests as public school peers;



- Requires DEW to establish a state report card similar to that for public schools for any private school with at least 20% of their enrollment in a voucher program.

To be clear, OEA remains opposed to the expansion of voucher programs in Ohio. The universal eligibility for EdChoice that occurred in the state budget was a grievous error that will have lasting implications for education in our state. We firmly believe that public funds should fund public schools which serve the vast majority of Ohio's students and are open to all. That being said, House Bill 407 will help to bring greater accountability and transparency to this arena.

OEA supports HB 407 and urges favorable consideration by this committee.

Thank you, Chair Manning. I'm happy to respond to questions at this time.