

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and Honorable Members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am grateful for the work you have done so far in creating and expanding school choice in Ohio.

Why is my family paying tuition at a non-chartered school when over 11,000 dollars of our property taxes go to our local 5-star district and even when Ohio has expanded its voucher program allowing families to send their children to a chartered alternate school for a reduced amount?

It's because the non-chartered option offers a different path to educational success for our sons. It's a path that our family decided meets our educational needs and will help build a strong foundation for their continued development.

Here is what we need for our sons and their educational journey:

We want our sons to learn from lecture and physical books, not screens.

Not only do the desks all face one direction to the front of the classroom so that the classrooms can be teacher-led, but there are also no Chromebooks, tablets or computers in the classrooms at our school. This is quite different from the majority of public (or even many private schools). Our local district boasts about employing the best and brightest teachers, but the students are spending a major portion of their day learning from various online apps. There is a reading app, a grammar app, multiple math apps, a news app, an app for their assignments, and the list goes on and on. The apps along with desks arranged in pods around the classroom allows for disorganized student-led and student-driven learning.

We want our sons to be challenged in an atmosphere that has rigid structure and purposeful order.

If the school district or teacher sets a low bar, students will simply do what is needed to get by. Conversely, if the bar is much higher, our sons have proven over the last two years that they can rise to meet and exceed it. Our school is full of teachers who possess high character and are subject matter experts. During our short stint in our local public school district, we were told our sons were doing well by their teachers. In reality, they were slowly falling behind and not meeting their potential. The local public-school teachers were providing a day that was often disorganized and unchallenging.

We want our sons to have excellent reading, spelling, grammar, and creative writing skills and not merely rely on technology or devices to communicate effectively.

At our school, there is explicit phonic and grammar instruction. Students learn the 72 sounds of the alphabet not just the 26 letters. Our sons are enjoying learning French and Latin. They are reading classic literature and primary sources instead of excerpts and contemporary works. Our local school district's program did not build a strong linguistic foundation in our

oldest sons early elementary years. As a result, today he continues to struggle with spelling and attends extra tutoring sessions to help bridge the gap.

We want our sons to understand that knowledge and virtue is the goal. A foundational footing that helps develop lifelong self-sustaining contributing members of our society.

The school our sons attend offers a rigorous liberal arts education that seeks to teach that truth is the foundation for knowledge and source of wisdom. As Plutarch the Greek philosopher, historian, and writer said, “the mind is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be kindled.”

In summary, we want (and our Country needs) for children to have the tools to be able to effectively speak, write, think, debate, question, solve problems and lead. The school our sons attend is providing a path to be successful in these areas. And it’s a path we didn’t find at our public school or any of the other chartered alternate schools we researched in central Ohio.

I may only be one Mom, but please know that I am here representing all the working parents in Ohio who don’t live close to the statehouse and/or couldn’t take leave to be here today. School choice is needed in Ohio because there is no one-size-fits-all model when it comes to education. We need to support and champion parents’ ability to choose the best option for their sons and daughters and trust that the parents know their kids best.

Accountability of both private and public schools will come naturally with competition and as a rising tide lifts all boats, so will school choice. All Ohio students will benefit from more education options being available in our State. And if you truly believe in school choice, there should not be limits on any available educational options so that families can make the best choice for their children.

I invite you all to come tour the school and see for yourself what makes it a special place to gain knowledge and see the fires being kindled.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony on supporting education opportunity for Ohio families in House Bill 96. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.