

**May 5, 2021**

**Interested Party Testimony – Matthew Sableski**

**H.B. 110**

Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide interested party testimony regarding H.B.110.

My name is Matt Sableski and I am the Principal at Carroll High School, a Catholic school near Dayton, OH. My school is made up of 700 students from a variety of school districts including the low-performing, inner-city district of Dayton Public Schools, the high-achieving suburb of Oakwood and many places in between. Our students are diverse in race, culture, faith, academic ability and most certainly socio-economic status. Because of the EdChoice Scholarship program over the last 15 years, Carroll has been able to serve this wonderful group of families who represent our larger society, and educate them in the Catholic faith, the arts and rigorous academics. Our school provides additional opportunities in 46 extracurricular activities, service groups and athletic teams in 22 varsity sports.

I am here today to urge you to maintain an EdChoice program that allows **all** families who want a choice in where and how to educate their children, *to truly have that choice!* Catholic and other private schools have played a key role in our society for hundreds of years and the contributions of our citizens who attended these schools are too numerous to count. However, the rising costs of education have made affording private and parochial schools difficult for even middle-class families and no matter how much we tighten our belts, we can only keep costs so low. The reality is, school choice is quickly becoming something for the upper-middle class and the wealthy. We **MUST** not leave the other groups out!

A year ago, February, I testified before a joint House and Senate committee about the importance maintaining the EdChoice program in Ohio. In my testimony I urged the committee to maintain a common sense list of eligible school districts and strongly supported an expansion of an

income-based program. I am eternally grateful to all members of the House and Senate who voted to maintain these critical programs!

That being said, I stand before you again today asking for your continued support of educational choice programs in Ohio. Specifically, I ask you to maintain the current criteria for school district eligibility of the EdChoice Scholarship, expansion of the income-based program and most importantly, an increase of the scholarship value at both the elementary and secondary school level.

Carroll High School has over 300 students who receive the traditional or expansion EdChoice Scholarship. Of those, 160 students qualify under the poverty threshold and do not pay any additional tuition over and above the \$6000 scholarship. We are tremendously grateful to have these students and believe strongly in educational value we provide their families. However, the cost to educate a student in the state of Ohio is well over \$12,000 and rising. Carroll's tuition is \$10,000 per year, which means for every EdChoice Scholarship student we educate, there is a negative impact on our budget of \$2000 - \$6,000. Last year, that lost revenue totaled \$640,000. This loss is made up by higher tuition rates, less assistance available to families who do not qualify for EdChoice, and an overall reduction in salaries for our faculty and staff. Increasing the scholarship amount to \$7,000 or \$8,000 per student would not erase the deficit, but it would go along way in making a Carroll education affordable for ALL families and give our teachers a more livable wage.

Since 2005, Carroll's tuition rate has necessarily increased by 105%. In that same period of time, the value of the EdChoice Scholarship has only increased 20%. Again, we are tremendously grateful for the opportunity the scholarship provides, but if this trend continues, it will be difficult to maintain the program in our school.

Many superintendents around the state believe that the EdChoice program will be devastating to their districts. However, the program has proven to be far less impactful than the open enrollment policies that many districts employ. For example, the school district in which my school resides claimed that they would lose approximately, \$300,000 per year as a result of the EdChoice program. That represents less than 1% of their annual budget. Conversely, loss of revenue from the EdChoice program would cost my school roughly \$1.8 million per year which

is roughly 35% of our total budget. Losing that revenue would dramatically reshape my school and parochial schools all over the state of Ohio. Schools would close... Ohio's teachers would lose jobs... and students would be placed into public schools. I would speculate that public districts would have difficulty accommodating the tremendous influx of new students who have never been in their schools. The burden to support this new reality would certainly fall on the taxpayers.

In conclusion, I want to thank this committee for the important work you for Ohio and its citizens. Under your leadership, Ohio has led the nation in school choice opportunities and I thank you on behalf of all private schools and our families. However, the race is not over. We must continue to press forward and continue that support in meaningful ways so that all students in Ohio can thrive in the environment that suits them best!