

# Ohio Alliance of Independent Schools

- Andrews Osborne Academy
- Bethany School
- 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
- Jos. and Florence Mandel Jewish Day 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
- Rockwern Academy
- Ruffing Montessori - Cleve. 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

June 4, 2024

## House Primary and Secondary Education Committee

House Bill 407 – Opponent Testimony  
Dan Dodd – Executive Director  
Ohio Alliance of Independent Schools

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding HB 407. While we were disappointed to not have the opportunity to participate in stakeholder meetings prior to the introduction of HB 407, we do appreciate the opportunity to provide written comments today.

Regardless of how one feels about the concept of vouchers, there should be a basic level of understanding that private schools fill a valuable role in Ohio's educational system. Parents choose this option for their children for a variety of reasons: academic offerings, teaching styles, safety, religious content, and the list goes on.

Unfortunately, the discourse surrounding the expansion of choice options consists of back and forth arguments about which schools are better or worse and the weapon of choice on each side has been standardized test scores. Public school teachers and administrators, never fans of having to spend time teaching to a test, are familiar with how these test scores are used against them in the form of "report cards" and state ratings used to determine success or failure of schools and districts. Those same teachers and administrators have sought to require private schools use the same tests and scores they loathe, thereby creating a competitive race to the bottom where the state will approve or disapprove of the decisions of parents on the education of their children based on standardized test scores and ignore all of the other reasons why parents chose private schools for their child.

The philosophy of, "If we have to do it, then everyone should have to," permeates HB 407. Audit requirements, standardized tests, school report cards, segregating funds... all of these proposed mandates are designed to make private schools look more like the public schools parents did not choose for their children. As our association has repeatedly maintained for several years, if it is the will of the General Assembly to impose this standardized testing regimen on public schools as a way to measure so-called accountability, it is well within its rights to do so. However, it would be a mistake to burden an alternative, private, constitutional form of education with the same mandates required of governmental entities. It effectively discourages many schools from participating in choice programs, which may be the purpose of the legislation. If it is, it stands in stark contrast to the position of the majority over the past several sessions of the General Assembly.

I know there's a lot of talk about accountability for voucher funds. We are accountable every day our schools unlock their doors and students walk in for a day of learning. Our schools are not mandated by the Ohio Constitution, our boards are not required by statute, and we don't collect income or property tax levy dollars. If parents are not buying what we are providing, our schools do not stay open. I'd ask this committee to consider that ultimate accountability in its deliberations.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to our state.