

## Effects of EdChoice Voucher Program ~ Community Talking Points

*Ohio has a very aggressive school voucher program (known as the EdChoice Scholarship [Voucher] Program) that provides public tax dollars to pay tuition for students attending private schools.*

*Because of a number of changes to Ohio law over the past decade, more and more vouchers are being granted every year. The following is information that parents and community members need to know about vouchers and your school district:*

- Ohio's EdChoice voucher program started out as a way to provide an alternative education choice for students whose local public school was considered by the state to be a "failing school". However, the program has expanded to include students from public schools that are doing a great job. 47.4% of buildings on the current list received overall grades of "A," "B," or "C."

*Fact: Ohio went from fewer than 300 school buildings being deemed eligible for vouchers in the 2018-2019 school year to more than 1200 school buildings for the 2020-2021 school year. That's a 300% increase in two years.*

- The EdChoice voucher program has two parts.
  - a. Students whose family income is at or below 200% of the federal poverty level can obtain a **state-paid** voucher to go to a private school regardless of how their public school performs.
  - b. Students whose public school is considered to be a "failing school" by the state, can take a voucher that the **school district pays** for.

*Fact: The voucher amount for elementary school vouchers is \$4,650 per student and high school vouchers are \$6,000 per student.*

- Local property tax dollars fund district-paid vouchers.
  - a. The state may provide some portion of the cost of the voucher, but districts must make up the difference from the proceeds from property tax levies.
  - b. In some cases, the district receives no state aid to pay for the vouchers, so property taxes cover the full cost.

*Fact: [Insert local data here]*

Other factors to consider:

- A growing number of students who have never been enrolled in a public school (the students were already attending a private school) are qualifying for district-paid vouchers, yet the school district pays.
- Once a student obtains a voucher, they can continue to receive vouchers throughout their education (K-12th grade), even if the school district's report card improves. This is a cost of more than \$65,000 over the student's academic career.
- According to data collected by the Ohio Department of Education and also a study performed by the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, voucher students in private schools performed worse than their public counterparts in reading and math..
- Private schools can pick and choose which students they will accept. Public schools accept all students.
- Private school students do not have to take the same required state tests as their public school counterparts, even though they are using public funds.