

EdChoice Talking Points

- ***Due to the extreme effects the voucher deductions are having on school districts and the flat foundation funding, the state should directly fund new vouchers by providing a state appropriation to cover the full cost of any new vouchers awarded during the current biennium.***
- It only takes a grade of D or F in **one** report card component, (overall building grade, value added, graduation rate, K-3 literacy), for a building to become EdChoice eligible. The current report card is flawed and under scrutiny for possible reforms.
 - o Ask: Buildings must have **two or more** components with D or F grades before qualifying as EdChoice eligible. Particularly as long as the current flawed report card is in place.
- Currently, if a student qualifies for both EdChoice voucher programs (income-based and building performance-based), the default program is the building performance-based version. This means the payments are deducted from school district's state aid.
 - o Ask: The default program for students who qualify for both should be the income-based voucher program funded by the state.
- The Ohio Legislature provided a safe harbor for districts during the period when new report cards, testing changes, and standards were being implemented. The safe harbor was to protect districts from negative effects of this transition, including suspending EdChoice eligibility. However, now that the safe harbor has ended, the improvements gained by districts during those years cannot be counted when determining EdChoice eligibility.
 - o Ask: If building performance improved during the safe harbor years (2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017), ODE must utilize that data to redetermine EdChoice eligibility.
- The K-3 literacy measure only reflects the progress of the third graders who are not yet on track for meeting the Third-Grade Reading Guarantee. Even if this is a fraction of third-grade students, their performance triggers a building to become EdChoice eligible, despite a building promoting all of their students to the fourth grade.
 - o Ask: Remove the K-3 Literacy measure from the criteria that makes a building eligible.
- Currently, EdChoice eligibility is based on data from two of the most recent three years. This criterion may be punishing buildings that have made improvement or have one year when performance slipped somewhat, but overall performance continues to improve.
 - o Ask: Require that performance be measured by "three consecutive years".
- Needed improvements were made in HB 166 to the value-added scores on district/building report cards. However, EdChoice eligibility continues to be measured by the state's old method for calculating value added scores.
 - o Ask: Require ODE to recompute the overall grades and value-added grades for the school years that will affect EdChoice eligibility to match the legislature's own conclusion that the old law was unfair as evidenced in HB 166.
- Ohio currently has buildings that are considered high performing (overall grade of A, B or C) on the list of buildings whose students qualify for EdChoice vouchers due to the problems and inconsistencies already listed.
 - o Ask: Any building receiving an overall grade of A, B or C should not become subject to EdChoice eligibility and should be removed from the eligibility list. Overall building grade is already being used to exempt high performing buildings from some EdChoice eligibility triggers.
- As clarified in HB 166, high school students no longer have to be enrolled in their public school district to qualify for an EdChoice voucher. This change takes money from districts that never received state aid for those students.
 - o Ask: Reverse the language in HB 166 to require high school students to attend a public school in the year prior to applying for an EdChoice voucher, as currently required for grades K-8.