



St . John the Evangelist Parish & School
201 North Pierce Street Delphos, Ohio 45833
Phone: (419) 695-4050 / Fax: (419) 695-4060

Father Dennis Walsh - Superintendent Adam Lee - JH/HS Principal Nathan Stant - Elementary Principal
Ted Hanf - Business Manager Jeff Swick - Director of Advancement

January 22, 2020

Dear Blue Jay Parents,

Before Christmas, the Ohio Department of Education published a list of Designated Schools that have failed to meet a passing grade on their state report card. This year a new criterion was applied as to what qualifies as a passing school building. Out of 3,000 public school buildings in the State of Ohio, 1,200 buildings received a "failing grade" in one or two important categories. This year Delphos Jefferson High School was listed on the Designated Schools list. This means that all students in the current grades 8-11 living in the Delphos School District would qualify for a Traditional EdChoice Scholarship for the 2020-2021 school year. A Traditional EdChoice Scholarship allows students to attend a private-chartered school that participates in the program.

The second part of the EdChoice program is called the EdChoice Expansion Scholarship. This is an income-based scholarship that allows any students at Delphos St. John's who meet a certain income limit to receive a scholarship from the State of Ohio to help pay for their tuition at Delphos St. John's. The income limits are quite generous and may become more generous in the coming years. This scholarship applies to all St. John's students in grades K-12 who qualify based on household income for the 2020-2021 school year.

Please Note: The entire EdChoice Program is a very fluid situation. There is currently an amendment in the Ohio Legislature to adjust the EdChoice law to change the definition of a "failing building". We are monitoring this fluid situation. Upon final clarification of the EdChoice Law we plan to host a St. John's community meeting to share and explain the details of the EdChoice Law and how it will impact you and our Blue Jay community. This community meeting and the possible deadlines associated with EdChoice will be very time sensitive. We will do all we can to supply you with the needed information as it is finalized in the state legislature. We will be communicating with you in the next week or so on exact times and schedules.

We invite you to please review the enclosed articles that bring insight and support for School Choice. Your voice and opinions hold a significant amount of power during this very important time in education. We suggest you reach out to your state legislature to voice your beliefs and feelings regarding School Choice. On the following pages, there is an article from Bishop Thomas discussing Catholic Education and an article from Forbes Magazine regarding some facts around School Choice and the impact it has on school systems.

Public education organizations held press conferences around the state, urging their members to lobby the Ohio General Assembly to roll back or limit eligibility for EdChoice Scholarships. With the application window for scholarships one week away, we need your help NOW!

Please contact our legislators in the Ohio House and Senate and let them know why school choice is important and tell them why they should protect EdChoice. Below are some ideas you may wish to share:

- One size does not fit all when it comes to children or their education, and no one knows their child better than a parent.
- It's important to find the right school for your child.
- Schools of choice, like those that accept students using EdChoice Scholarships, are accountable. Parents can remove their child at any time, providing accountability for every child and family.
- A child does not have to accept a scholarship or leave their school district.
- Each scholarship goes to the family of the student, not the school. Parents choose where to send their child from a list of schools approved by the Ohio Department of Education. These schools are chartered by the State Board of Education and comply with the same Operating Standards as traditional school districts.

Our representatives for Allen and Van Wert Counties are listed below with their contact information.

Ohio Senate - Mr. Matt Huffman (Allen Co.), 614-466-7584, Huffman@ohiosenate.gov

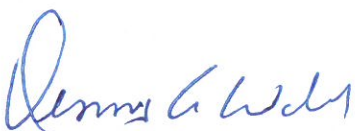
Ohio Senate - Mr. Rob McColley (Van Wert Co.), 614-466-8150, McColley@ohiosenate.gov

Ohio House Rep. - Mr. Robert Cupp (Allen Co.), 614-466-9624, repcupp@ohiohouse.gov

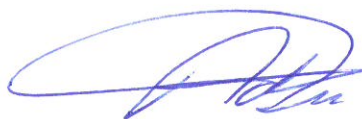
Ohio House Rep. - Mr. Craig Riedel (Van Wert Co.), 614-644-509, reriedel@ohiohouse.gov

Thank you for being engaged in your children's education. Your choice of the education your child is provided is just that, your choice. We look forward to continuing our Faith based education that we provide here at Delphos St. John's. Please contact us with any questions or concerns you may have.

We look forward to meeting with you soon to discuss the path that we will be taking to help support all of you as we look to grow into the future here at St. John's.



Very Rev. Dennis G. Walsh
Superintendent



Mr. Adam Lee
JH/High School Principal



Mr. Nathan Stant
Elementary Principal

Leading the FLOCK

BY BISHOP DANIEL E. THOMAS



“Catholic Schools: Supporting the Education of the Whole Person”

The benefits of a Catholic Education are far reaching for students, their families, the workplace, their communities, our Church and nation! Whether you, like me, benefitted from many years of Catholic Education or not, it is important for all of us to advocate that today’s parents have the option to choose where their children will be educated. Parents have the right to form their children in body, mind and spirit, by selecting the best educational opportunity to assist them in that formation.

As Catholic Schools Week approaches, reflecting on the treasure that Catholic Education has been in my own life, I write to share with you some thoughts on its value and the increased opportunities for students to attend our Catholic schools.

In 1997 the Congregation for Catholic Education was prophetic in its document *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*. In it, the Congregation recognizes the difficulties and crises facing education, namely, subjectivism, moral relativism, and nihilism; it also identifies rapid technological changes, migration changes, and marginalized Christian faith in traditionally well-evangelized areas as emerging challenges facing us all and especially Catholic education. Such a

bleak cultural outlook calls us to renew our resolve to support Catholic education and authentically Catholic schools.

Since 1782, the United States has benefitted from Catholic schools by their serving students from every race and economic status, by their saving states and public schools billions of dollars each year (\$24 billion annually), and by integrating Gospel values into the educational experience of each student. Catholic schools have a significant tradition of developing the whole person. To more fully embrace our being created in the image of God, Catholic education seeks to affect not only the mind and body, but also the soul.

Through frequent observance of the sacraments, daily catechetical instruction, and through a commitment to learning and practicing virtues from school leaders and teachers, students in Catholic schools experience formation for their souls that is fundamentally unique, and the results of a Catholic education speak for themselves. For example, Catholic school students are more likely to pray daily, attend church more often, and retain a Catholic identity as an adult. They are more likely to vote, more likely to graduate from high school, especially for minority students, and are more likely to attend college.

Researchers have given a name to the continued documented success of student achievement and outcomes: *the Catholic School Effect*. Recently the Fordham Institute published an article that found students in Catholic schools exhibit more self-control than those in other private or public schools. The virtue of self-control is one of many that our schools reinforce each day; it is also an indicator of how successful one will be with respect to spirituality, health, and financial stability throughout life.

Last October, the Ohio Department of Education released a public school classification listing which dramatically increased the number of students eligible for the EdChoice Scholarship. This list now includes at least one designated public institution from each of the nineteen counties within the Diocese of Toledo. There has also been an increase in both the funding and eligible grade levels for the EdChoice Expansion Scholarship, serving low-income families. Such actions provide greater opportunities for parents to have choices for where their children are educated.

As Catholics, we believe that parents are the primary educators of their children, and therefore parental choice in education is a fundamental right. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* highlights, "As those first responsible for the education of their children, parents have the right to choose a school for them which corresponds to their own convictions. This right is fundamental. As far as possible parents have the duty of choosing schools that will best help them in their task as Christian educators. Public authorities have the duty of guaranteeing this parental right and of ensuring the concrete conditions for its exercise" (CCC 2229).

This is not a new practice or belief. In 1965, the Second Vatican Council issued the *Declaration on Christian Education* highlighting this right of parents and the obligation of the state: "The public power, which has the obligation to protect

and defend the rights of citizens, must see to it, in its concern for distributive justice, that public subsidies are paid out in such a way that parents are truly free to choose according to their conscience the schools they want for their children" (6).

In 1986, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith connected school choice to an issue of social justice in that "whenever the State lays claim to an educational monopoly, it oversteps its rights and offends justice...The State cannot without injustice merely tolerate so-called private schools. Such schools render a public service and therefore have a right to financial assistance" (*Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation* 94) and should be supported through our state government.

The Catholic Church supports parents' rights to be the primary educators of their children, as well as the importance of providing parents with educational options. True school choice includes options for public education, non-public education, or homeschooling. Committed to the virtues of charity and justice, as a Diocese we will work to ensure that parents know about these educational choice opportunities, and we will continue to support school choice within the state.

This year *Celebrate Catholic Schools Week* is January 26th through February 1st. Please join me in celebrating the treasure of Catholic education with the theme "Catholic Schools: Learn. Serve. Lead. Succeed." Please pray with me in gratitude for all of our Catholic Schools, our students, teachers and staff, so that in all their efforts God is better known, loved and served.



Most Rev. Daniel E. Thomas
Bishop of Toledo
January 13, 2020

No, School Choice Is Not Gutting Ohio's Public Schools



Mike McShane, Contributor - Director of National Research at EdChoice

If recent headlines are to be believed, the educational sky is falling in the state of Ohio. It appears that the Educational Choice (EdChoice) Scholarship Program is fomenting total budgetary and administrative chaos.

Vouchers are “gutting” Ohio’s Schools, according to my *Forbes* colleague Peter Greene. They are “exploding” according to one blogger. “It’s huge,” a representative of the Ohio Association of School Business Officials is quoted as saying.

This all seems a bit over-the-top for a program that just 22,608 of the state’s 1.7 million students used last year, according to the *ABCs of School Choice*. (That’s 1.3% for those of you keeping score at home.)

First things first, kids move all the time - Schools are funded based on enrollment. If students leave, funding drops. This is the “bite” that voucher detractors say that the program takes out of school budgets.

Now, students leave schools for lots of reasons. Toledo provides a great case in point. We’ll begin during the six years before 2005, when the EdChoice program was established. (Note: The EdChoice program is not run by or affiliated with EdChoice, which is the national nonprofit that employs me.) Here are the enrollment figures from the state of Ohio:

1999-2000 School Year: 38,023 students	2000-2001 School Year: 37,426 students
2001-2002 School Year: 36,839 students	2002-2003 School Year: 35,742 students
2003-2004 School Year: 34,483 students	2004-2005 School Year: 32,976 students

The change from 1999 to 2005 represents a 13.3% decrease in student enrollment. Clearly, none of these enrollment changes could have been caused by the voucher program, because it didn’t exist yet. So what happened?

Students were simply moving from the district to neighboring districts, or to private schools, or moving out of the area all together. This is normal behavior for school districts. Kids move around. Was there outrage then about the “bite” that other districts were taking out of Toledo? Were folks talking about those districts “gutting” the Toledo schools? No, they recognized that this is simply the way that the world works, and that the district would have to adjust for its decreasing enrollment.

Fast forward to today. Enrollment in the district has shrunk to 23,160 students. Was this because of vouchers? No. Only 2,019 students in Toledo take advantage of the EdChoice program and less than 1,000 take advantage of the state’s other private school choice programs. Students leaving with vouchers are a tiny sliver of those leaving Toledo’s schools, why so much focus on them?

Fixed and Variable Costs - Traditional public schools have a point when they say that they get lumbered with fixed costs when students leave. A school still needs to have a principal, it has to be heated and cooled, and the rest. Losing a handful of students doesn’t change that.

Be that as it may, public school supporters dramatically overstate their case. Not all costs are fixed. My colleague Marty Lueken estimated that in Ohio, \$8,129 of the \$13,452 dollars spent per student were spent on variable costs, costs that could fluctuate with changes in enrollment. So, as long as the voucher awarded is less than the variable costs, districts will not be harmed.

Want to guess the average voucher amount in the program everyone is so up in arms about? That would be \$4,762, just over half of those variable costs. In order for districts to truly lose out, a whopping 68% of their costs would have to be fixed. They are not. While districts are seeing less revenue, they are seeing even less cost, so they are coming out ahead on a per-pupil basis.

It should also be noted that these fixed/variable cost arguments are only ever used to call for more spending. Have you ever heard a school district say when enrollment is growing, "Well, we already have a principal, and we're already heating and cooling the building, so we'll only need half the funding for those new students." I didn't think so. Maybe we should take those pleas with a bit of skepticism.

Playing fast and loose with data - Given these realities, how do we get to claims about the "staggering" impact of the voucher program? Well, as we just saw, detractors can only present raw numbers and not per-pupil figures. If that doesn't work, they can quote numbers out of context to make them seem bigger than they are.

Here is a quote from Peter Greene's article I link to above: "Toledo's voucher costs increased by \$5.7 million. In smaller districts, the dollar amount might not seem impressive, but Scioto Valley's increase amounts to a 965% jump in voucher costs."

Now, why might one use a nominal figure in the first sentence and a percentage in the last? Well that's because \$5.7 million is only 1.2% of the Toledo's \$454 million in total revenue. Doesn't sound so staggering now, does it? And that 965% change for Scioto Valley is just over \$100,000 for a district with \$17.6 million in revenue. That is one half of one percent.

Here is another data point for context. Around 93,000 students take advantage of Ohio's open enrollment law, allowing them to move between public school districts. This is substantially more students than the voucher program enrolls and presents the same costs to districts, and yet, the criticism is much more muted. Curious, that.

The real issue - All of this obfuscation and pettifogging is done to avoid the real conversation. No one wants to answer the question: *Why are these students leaving?* No child in Ohio is required to use a voucher. They only use them when they are not satisfied with their current school and want to go somewhere else. Want to keep kids, and the funding that comes along with them? Do better and they won't leave.

Article by Mike McShane, *Forbes Magazine*,

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/mikemcshane/2019/12/09/no-school-choice-is-not-gutting-ohios-public-schools/#6e041d7e261b>