

SHORT-TERM VOUCHER FIXES

A common repeated message goes a long way when trying to get members of the legislature to listen.

Please call members of the Ohio Senate and Ohio House Leadership and Education Committee members with this message for short-term fixes to Voucher Funding.



1. Remove budget language from House Bill 166 expanding vouchers in grades 7-8 and for high schools. Restore voucher language to pre-budget language.

Rationale: The budget expansion places a financial burden on traditional public school districts and was not fully vetted during the Senate or House budget process

2. Limit report card look back to 2017-2018, 2018-2019 and direct ODE to recalculate the buildings eligible for vouchers based on the new look back language.

Rationale: The State should not make judgements about a building's performance based on six or seven (2013-2014) year old data. The safe harbor provided schools the ability to catch up with the rapid changes made by the legislature seven years ago when testing and cut scores rapidly changed. Using recent data is a more accurate reflection of what is happening in schools even with a flawed report card. Nearly half of the 2020-2021 buildings received an overall grade of A, B or C on their current state report card.

3. Make the default for vouchers the Expansion (income) vouchers instead of the Traditional EdChoice voucher.

Rationale: Making EdChoice the default for new vouchers has placed a heavy financial burden on traditional school districts. Since the state has frozen the foundation funding for the biennium, then it should not deduct funding from schools to pay for private education of students who never attended their districts. The deducts are making it harder to educate the students who attend public schools. Student Wellness funds are not a substitute for vouchers according to HB 166 language.

4. Restore funding for school districts that have lost funds to voucher students who were not part of their 2019 Average Daily Enrollment.

Rationale: School districts have used millions of dollars of local funds to send students to private schools. Current law is not sustainable. It has negatively impacted education quality and the financial stability of hundreds of school districts. Current law will create the need for additional local levies and overburden local tax payers where they pass.

5. Cap the loss of funds for high poverty (50% economically disadvantage) districts at 5% and other school districts at 10%.

Rationale: These options protect school districts from additional harm if the previous amendment, to restore funding, isn't fully implemented, or the EdChoice numbers continue to increase during the funding freeze.

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