

Dear Senator Dolan,

My name is Liz Kirby and I am the Superintendent of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District. Having worked in public education for 25 years, I have learned that the best way to really understand the work happening in the schools is to get on the ground and visit schools, observe classes and talk with students. To that end, I would like to invite you to visit the CH-UH City School District.

Located on the east side of Cleveland, we serve a vibrant, diverse community, made up of Cleveland Heights, University Heights, and a section of South Euclid. We educate approximately 5,000 students each year, from preschool through 12th grade, in seven elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school, a career and technical education consortium, and an alternative options school. We are also a member of the First Ring Collaborative, an association of 16 area school districts that work together to address the challenges related to poverty, mobility, and the achievement gap.

You have probably heard of my District as it relates to EdChoice and school funding advocacy. In the entire state of Ohio, CH-UH Schools are the most impacted in terms of funds lost. We lose about \$9 million a year in state funding in order to fund EdChoice school tuition vouchers. To be clear, we fully support the right of all families to choose the best educational options for their children. But EdChoice vouchers simply cannot continue to be funded at the expense of public schools.

The comprehensive reform proposed in the Fair School Funding Bill is necessary in order for our district to provide the resources to meet the needs of our students. I am in the second year of my superintendency here, and it has truly been a struggle to fulfill our district's mission against the realities of our budget. We have had to make millions of dollars in cuts, including valued staff members and programming, to keep our budget afloat.

School is ending soon, so I am hoping you can find time to meet with my students, educators and myself during the week of May 24. I will also invite First Ring schools to send students and stakeholders to meet with you. If that does not work, I can find times in June to schedule a session. It would be a pleasure to have you join us and see firsthand the learning happening in our schools, and why educational funding reform in Ohio is necessary for public schools like ours to continue providing the best education possible for children.

Sincerely,
Superintendent Liz Kirby