Catholic Diocese
of Cleveland
Secretariat for Catholic Education

School Choice Update, November 2, 2026

The Catholic Conference of Ohio, which represents the Church's position before the Ohio General Assembly, various state departments, bureaus, agencies and other organizations anticipates that, regardless of the circuit court decision, the EdChoice lawsuit will be appealed to the Ohio Supreme Court. The EdChoice scholarships are on strong legal ground.

Furthermore, the next General Assembly is to pass a new biennial budget for the new governor to sign by July 1, and education funding is expected to be a topic of major interest. The "court of public opinion" will be critical to the future of education policy, including school choice policies. Some important facts:

- **Previous Supreme Court rulings support school choice programs.**
  - In 2002, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the Cleveland Scholarship Program, Ohio's original school choice program, in Zelman v. Simmons-Harris.
  - To date, 34 states plus Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico have established and/or expanded school choice programs.
- **EdChoice scholarships do not divert funding from public schools.**
  - EdChoice scholarship funding is separate from public-school funding, which is in the sixth year of a six-year phase-in of the "Fair School Funding" plan, a bipartisan inputs-based model delivering more funding to public schools than ever.
    - If legislators choose not to fund EdChoice scholarships in the future, public schools would not automatically receive an equivalent increase in their budgets.
  - While the Ohio Constitution requires a "thorough and efficient system of common schools," it does not prevent the state from providing parents with educational options and financial assistance.
- **Parents—not schools—control EdChoice scholarships.**
  - Scholarships are awarded to parents, who may use them at any chartered nonpublic school that agree to be providers and accept the accompanying accountability measures.
  - If a student leaves a chartered nonpublic school, the school does not retain the scholarship funds.
- **Catholic school parents contribute to the same tax base as parents whose children attend public schools.**
  - Catholic school families pay federal, state, and local income taxes, as well as property taxes, just as public-school families do.
    - Approximately two thirds of property taxes go only to local public schools.
    - State scholarships and general public education funding in Ohio are supported by a combination of state revenue and dedicated funds.
    - Including primarily from state taxes, (including income and sales tax), as well various smaller sources, such as Ohio lotter profits.

- A robust system of educational options is good, pro-family public policy.

- **State scholarships are efficient for Ohio taxpayers.**
  - The average cost to educate a public-school student in Ohio was $17,609 in 2025-26.
  - The average EdChoice Scholarship is $5,470 across the Expansion, Traditional, and Cleveland programs.
  - The highest income scholarship category accounts for 16% of applications but receive less than 3% of the funds, with individual scholarships averaging $616 for K–8 students and $840 for high school students.
  - When Auxiliary Services funding ($910 per student) and Administrative Cost Reimbursement ($410 per student) are included, the total average state assistance for chartered nonpublic students is approximately $6,808 per student.
    - If all EdChoice scholarship students were to enroll in public schools, state and local school districts would need to spend significantly more to educate these additional students.
- **Catholic schools comply with state chartering requirements.**
  - Requirements include teacher licensure, compliance with state operating standards, state audits, and approved testing.
  - All archdiocesan Catholic schools are accredited through the Ohio Catholic School Accrediting Association.
  - Schools that choose to become providers to any of Ohio's state scholarships, such as EdChoice, agree to accountability measures such as administering state-mandated assessments to every student on scholarship and reporting the scores annually for publication on the ODEW website, caps on tuition according to household income, and reporting of tuition and fees.
- **Catholic schools in Ohio are ethnically and racially diverse.**
  - Statewide, Catholic schools enroll, on average, a similar percentage of African American students as public schools and an even higher percentage of Hispanic students.

Resources:

- To see the last year's district-by-district data on public school funding as the Fair School Funding plan has phased-in, along recent state scholarship participation, visit http://u.osmfr.org/m/1414487/
- For archived advocacy updates, including explanations of the above data, visit https://neocatholicschools.blogspot.com/
- To see the Catholic Conference of Ohio's information regarding state scholarships, https://www.ohiocathconf.org/focus-areas/education/edchoice
- To view the Ohio Department of Education State Scholarship landing page, visit https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Other-Resources/Scholarships
- To view the Ohio Department of Education's explanation for the state portion of education funding, visit https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Finance-and-Funding/Overview-of-School-Funding
- To access all Ohio Department of Education and Workforce data for both public and nonpublic (including Catholic) schools, see https://reports.education.ohio.gov/.