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Media contacts at end of release

Public school leaders ‘deeply disappointed’ by voucher overhaul

COLUMBUS — This is a sad week for public education. The Ohio School Boards Association, Buckeye Association of School Administrators and Ohio Association of School Business Officials are deeply disappointed by the actions of the General Assembly to overhaul the Educational Choice (EdChoice) voucher program without debate, public input, or notice just mere hours after introducing the plan.

The plan, contained in Senate Bill 89, will designate 473 school buildings in 87 public school districts as “failing.” Students entitled to attend these schools will receive \$4,650 or \$6,000 in private tuition vouchers paid out of school district budgets. Of these 473 schools, 110 buildings received an A, B or C on the 2018-19 state report card, representing 21% of the total schools on the eligibility list. 43 of these buildings will become EdChoice eligible despite never before having been on the eligibility list. The bill will also increase the poverty threshold from 200% to 250% for the income-based expansion portion of the program.

This outcome will have a devastating impact on school budgets amid state revenue cuts, declining local revenues, and mounting pandemic costs. This harmful plan will continue to siphon locally voted tax dollars away from students in public schools and send them to unaccountable private schools. This threatens districts’ abilities to serve and provide opportunities for their remaining students - students who have chosen to attend their public schools - and jeopardizes the quality of their educational experiences.

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