



Ohio Ed Choice FAQ



Over the last several weeks, you may have seen or heard on social media or news outlets commentary about Ohio's Ed Choice. We'd like to take this opportunity to provide some facts about Ed Choice and how it may affect Ross Local Schools.

Generally speaking, what is Ed Choice?

Ed Choice is Ohio's school voucher program that allows parents from state designated "low performing" Ohio schools an opportunity to receive vouchers to assist in paying private school tuition for their children. These vouchers serve as a "scholarship" and are taken directly from public school state funding and given to the private schools.

Did this program just start in Ohio? Why all the controversy about it now?

Ed Choice in Ohio has been around since 2006. This year, Ohio legislature changed the criteria for what qualifies a public school as "low performing". These changes in criteria mean that **over 1200*** Ohio public schools are now considered "low performing" and their students are eligible to receive voucher dollars taken from their public school district to be used towards tuition at an Ed Choice approved private school. This is an astronomical increase from the **120** public schools that were considered "low performing" last year.

****Of these 1200+ "low performing" schools, 582 received an A, B or C on the State Report Card in 2018-19.***

Ross has traditionally been such a high performing district. Does Ed Choice impact us?

Due to the changes in criteria, many districts that have traditionally been "high performing" now have schools that qualify for Ed Choice. Impacted districts in our area include Lakota, Indian Hill and Wyoming. For us, Elda has been designated as an Ed Choice School for 2020-21.

Why is Elda on the list? What criteria determine if a school is "low performing"?

There are 6 different categories that qualify a school to be considered "low performing". For Elda, a metric called *value added* caused Elda to be on the Ed Choice list of low performing schools. Part of the issue with this expansion program is that test score data from as far back as the **2013-14** school year is being used to determine qualifying schools. This means that data from students who are currently at RMS and RHS is being used to determine Elda's status for 2020-21.

How much money will this cost our District?

This is an unknown for us right now. Each scholarship for students in grades K-8 will cost our District \$4,650. One other component to the program is that the scholarship "stays with the student" throughout their educational career. This means a student who is eligible to enter kindergarten at Elda next year can take the Ed Choice Scholarship, continue on in private school for their 13 year educational career, and receive the money the entire time. The \$4,650 increases to \$6,000 when students enter grade 9. In theory, 1 student making this choice could cost Ross \$65,850 over a 13 year period. If 20 students make this choice it would cost Ross Local Schools \$1.3 million over the same 13 years. Again, these dollars are taken directly from our state funding and funneled to the private schools to pay for students (like the ones in the examples above) who might never step foot in a Ross school.



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Is this a “done deal”? Is there potential for change before this takes effect next year?

As of now, the newly expanded program is law. Many school districts and lobbying organizations (including Ross) are urging our local representatives to re-think these changes and take action to prevent this from happening next year. We are asking our state representatives to act on these changes prior to their leaving Columbus for their winter break.

As a community, what can we do to help?

Contact your local representatives to have your voice heard. We, along with many other districts, believe that this is an attack on public education in Ohio which will decimate districts across the state through significant funding losses. As mentioned, the financial impact for us is unknown at this time. Many neighboring districts however are forecasting millions of dollars of lost revenue if Ed Choice continues in its current form.

Below is a list of contacts locally who have influence to prevent this from taking effect next year:

Senators:

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Additional legislators can be located at the link below:

<https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/>