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End EdChoice Vouchers

WHEREAS: Public schools are the foundation of our democratic society; and

WHEREAS: Our public schools have been historically underfunded with the funding system being declared unconstitutional four times; and

WHEREAS: In the last biennium, foundation formula funding was frozen for districts further perpetuating the underfunding problem; and

WHEREAS: The EdChoice voucher program deducts money from these already underfunded school districts for each student who chooses to take a voucher; and

WHEREAS: This money is deducted even for students for whom the district never received state funding; and

WHEREAS: The EdChoice performance-based voucher, predicated upon a flawed report card system, was created under the guise of providing better education opportunities for minority students and low-income students in low-performing schools yet research studies such as the Credo Report by the Fordham foundation and the recent research by the Cincinnati Enquirer, show that students who choose to take vouchers have lower academic outcomes than their comparative peers who choose to stay in public schools; and

WHEREAS: In many districts, such as in Cleveland Heights University Heights, the bulk of students who choose to take vouchers do so for religious reasons rather than based upon the performance of the school thereby diverting taxpayer funds, voted on by the public for the public school, to private, religious schools; and

WHEREAS: This diversion of funds is harming the 90% of students, especially in our low-income, high minority districts, who choose public schools by taking away scarce resources that could be used for more school nurses, counselors, teachers, technology, lower class sizes, classroom materials, and other resources that are needed to create more equity in our districts.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the Ohio AFL-CIO will work in coalition with like-minded unions and organizations to end EdChoice vouchers in Ohio, to examine all vouchers and their impact on public school districts, and to fight for public dollars to be used to resource all public schools with equitable opportunities for all students.

Submitted by: The Ohio Federation of Teachers