



# Ohio Legislative Service Commission

## Bill Analysis

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### S.B. 229

129th General Assembly  
(As Introduced)

**Sens.** Sawyer, Kearney, Tavares

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## BILL SUMMARY

- Requires the Department of Education to conduct a performance review of each chartered nonpublic school participating in the Educational Choice Scholarship Program.

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## CONTENT AND OPERATION

The bill directs the Department of Education to conduct a performance review of each chartered nonpublic school that enrolls students awarded a scholarship (voucher) under the Educational Choice (EdChoice) Scholarship Pilot Program. All performance reviews must be completed prior to the date the Department begins accepting scholarship applications for the 2012-2013 school year. According to the Department's web site, the application period for the 2012-2013 school year runs from February 1, 2012, through April 13, 2012.<sup>1</sup>

Each performance review must analyze the following:

(1) The scores attained by scholarship students on the state achievement assessments, including a comparison of the performance of the chartered nonpublic school's scholarship students with the performance of students enrolled in the scholarship students' resident school districts;

(2) Any of the performance indicators established by the State Board of Education for purposes of the public school district and building report cards that the Department considers appropriate to apply to the chartered nonpublic school. The

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<sup>1</sup> See "EdChoice Parent Information" at [education.ohio.gov](http://education.ohio.gov). Click on "School Options," then on "EdChoice Scholarship Program," and finally on "EdChoice Parent Information."

performance indicators are (a) a 75% student proficiency rate on all grade-level achievement assessments, (b) an 85% cumulative student proficiency rate on the Ohio Graduation Tests through the eleventh grade, (c) a 93% attendance rate, and (d) a 90% graduation rate.<sup>2</sup>

(3) Any other performance measures the Department considers appropriate.<sup>3</sup>

## Background

The Educational Choice Scholarship Pilot Program provides scholarships to students in lower performing public schools to pay tuition at chartered nonpublic schools. The program operates in all school districts except the Cleveland Municipal School District, which has its own voucher program. According to the Department of Education, applications for just over 17,000 EdChoice scholarships were submitted for the 2011-2012 school year,<sup>4</sup> and up to 60,000 scholarships may be awarded in each future school year. There are no income limits to participate, but priority must be given to prior recipients and to new applicants whose family incomes are at or below 200% of the federal poverty guideline.<sup>5</sup>

Generally, a student is eligible for an EdChoice scholarship if the student is attending, or otherwise would be assigned to, a school building operated by the student's resident school district that, in two of three report card rankings, either (1) is rated academic watch or academic emergency, or (2) is ranked in the lowest 10% of all public school buildings according to performance index score, and, in either case, was not rated excellent or effective in the most recent ranking. A student who receives an Ed Choice scholarship may receive scholarships until the student completes grade 12.<sup>6</sup>

The maximum amount of each scholarship is \$4,250 for grades K to 8, and \$5,000 for grades 9 to 12. To finance the scholarships, each EdChoice recipient is counted in the enrollment of the student's resident district for school funding purposes. The

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<sup>2</sup> See R.C. 3302.02, not in the bill. The specific performance indicators may be found on the Department's web site, [www.ode.state.oh.us](http://www.ode.state.oh.us). Click on "Accountability" and then on "State/Local Report Card." Finally, click on "Local Report Card and Accountability Information" to access the indicators for each school year.

<sup>3</sup> Section 1 of the bill.

<sup>4</sup> See pp. 15-16 of LSC's publication *Budget Footnotes*, September 2011, available online at [www.lsc.state.oh.us](http://www.lsc.state.oh.us). Click on "Publications," "Budget Footnotes," "Volume 35 – FY 2012," and finally "September 2011."

<sup>5</sup> R.C. 3310.02, not in the bill.

<sup>6</sup> R.C. 3310.03, not in the bill.

Department of Education then deducts the amount of the student's scholarship from the district's state aid account.<sup>7</sup>

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## HISTORY

ACTION	DATE
Introduced	09-21-11

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<sup>7</sup> R.C. 3310.08 and 3310.09, neither section in the bill.

