



For Immediate Release

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State Budget Expands School Choice in Ohio

New school voucher program created, expansions made to two existing programs

COLUMBUS, Ohio (June 30, 2011) – Governor Kasich finalized many momentous changes and expansions to Ohio’s school choice programs today as he signed the state budget bill into law. The budget creates Ohio’s fourth school voucher program, which will provide K-12 scholarships for students with special needs, and expands two of the state’s existing voucher programs.

“This is a monumental day for many families in Ohio who want and deserve the opportunity to send their children to the educational environment that best meets their learning needs,” said School Choice Ohio Executive Director Chad Aldis. “Ohio families demanded more educational options for their children, and today it is evident that Ohio’s leaders listened.”

The budget creates Ohio’s fourth school voucher program. Named for a former state representative who advocated for the scholarship during his tenure in the statehouse, the Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship will provide a scholarship to any child with special needs who has an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Approximately 13,000 scholarships will be available, and each scholarship will be worth 90 percent of the student’s special education funding amount, with a cap of \$20,000. The scholarship can be used to pay for tuition at a private school, additional services at a private provider, or at other public schools.

In addition to the creation of the new scholarship program, the budget also makes changes to two existing scholarship programs. The EdChoice Scholarship Program will quadruple the number of scholarships available during the next two years. By 2013, Ohio students will have access to 60,000 scholarships. Eligibility for the program was also expanded to include students who attend the schools in the bottom 10 percent of the state, according to performance index scores. A second application window will open July 1 and give families 45 days to apply.

The Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Program will also see changes, including an \$800-\$1,550 per student increase in the scholarship amount to mirror the EdChoice Scholarship. The program, previously limited to students entering grades K-8, is now open to students in any grade.

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“School Choice Ohio applauds the work of the Ohio legislature and Governor Kasich on this budget,” said Aldis. “Many more Ohio families will now have the chance to find the best learning environment for their child, and our schools, communities, and state will be stronger for it.”

For more information about Ohio’s school voucher programs, visit www.schoio.org.

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Editor’s Note: To arrange interviews with families in your area that will benefit from these changes to school choice programs, contact Kaleigh Frazier, School Choice Ohio’s communications coordinator, at 614-223-1555.