

Fr. Bob: "Expansion of EdChoice is a remarkable gift to all of us here at St. Brendan..."

Ohio taxpayers are providing a "remarkable gift" to all the private schools of Ohio, both secular and religious. But wait, the Ohio Constitution via Article 1, section 7 protects citizens (taxpayers) from being compelled to support religious institutions against their consent.

All men have a natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own conscience. No person shall be compelled to attend, erect, or support any place of worship, or maintain any form of worship, against his consent; and no preference shall be given, by law, to any religious society; nor shall any interference with the rights of conscience be permitted. No religious test shall be required, as a qualification for office, nor shall any person be incompetent to be a witness on account of his religious belief; but nothing herein shall be construed to dispense with oaths and affirmations. Religion, morality, and knowledge, however, being essential to good government, it shall be the duty of the General Assembly to pass suitable laws, to protect every religious denomination in the peaceable enjoyment of its own mode of public worship, and to encourage schools and the means of instruction.

Nonetheless, those in political control of Ohio seem to have no regard for the Ohio Constitution. That's why there are multiple lawsuits against the State of Ohio.

Attached below is a letter from Fr. Bob to Saint Brendan constituents.

Dear School Parents,

07.31.23

The recent approval and expansion of EdChoice is a tremendous boon to our school families and Catholic education across Ohio. While its implementation will be a challenging process, we are abundantly blessed by the opportunities and savings it presents for all of us.

As you navigate this letter, please understand that **we are committed to ensuring that no family's tuition obligation will increase from what was originally proposed to them in April**. Inversely, most families will be saving more money than ever on their child's Catholic education at St Brendan.

Here are the important highlights for this year's plan to best support our school families:

- We will resume tuition payments in August. Until the grant monies you receive come through later this year, we still have significant costs related to the school, including paying the salaries and healthcare costs for our teachers. This is a steep expense that the parish offertory cannot support alone.
- Every family is strongly encouraged to apply for and receive the EdChoice scholarship unless you already receive the Jon Peterson scholarship. Depending on your income level, you will receive up to \$6,165 from the State. Even a small scholarship is a major blessing for you, the school, and the parish.
- We will work separately and directly with any families receiving Jon Peterson or other state scholarships, families already receiving an EdChoice scholarship, and families who have pre-paid their tuition. These parties can expect separate communication (and our support) very shortly.

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- 'Parish Subsidy' in its current form will make way for 'needs-based grants' this year. This is supplemental financial aid that will ensure every family maximizes their savings, and additional support is allocated where it is needed the most. The landmark and unprecedented support from EdChoice will serve as the new 'universal' subsidization of your child's education costs. Again, the parish remains committed to helping all families pay no more than what they already expected to pay should there be a difference in cost to you between EdChoice and Parish Subsidy this year. Needs-based grants, Dolphin Dollars, and SGOs like Emmaus Road will enable this. We will reassess this model next year.

***Please note:** If a family elects to not apply for the universal EdChoice scholarship available to them, we will respect that decision. Supplemental financial aid from the parish in this case will require a meeting with Fr Bob or Fr Stinnett before being awarded.*

The next page illustrates examples of how tuition payments will look this year with EdChoice scholarships. The expansion of EdChoice is a remarkable gift to all of us here at St Brendan and should truly be celebrated as such. If you have any lingering questions or concerns after reviewing this letter, please join me for a town hall-style meeting on Monday, August 7th at 6:30PM in the school cafeteria.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Bob

Pastor

Saint Brendan the Navigator

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