

**Bowling Green Board of Education President, Andy Gonyer argues that a revised HB671 (the Bully Bill) is still unconstitutional.**

Representative Jamie Callender, in a very irrational maneuver, introduced HB671 that would require the state to escrow all state funds Coalition/VHO member districts are entitled to. After experiencing possibly unprecedented backlash, Representative Callender announced that his intent was to just escrow the amount of financial support districts had provided for the EdChoice voucher litigation.

Board President Gonyer stated that this is still “intimidation and bullying” and “gross abuse and dereliction of duty.” HB671 in any form is absurd and doltish.

**Latest attempt by state to silence public schools about risks of vouchers amounts to bullying, Gonyer says**

Bowling Green Board of Education President Ardy Gonyer talks about vouchers.

**Posted By:** [Jan Larson McLaughlin](#) February 17, 2026

**By JAN McLAUGHLIN**

**BG Independent News**

Under Ohio law, bullying at public schools must be reported and investigated.

So on Tuesday evening, Bowling Green Board of Education President Ardy Gonyer put the state on notice. The recent effort by State Rep. Jamie Callender, R-Concord, to get public schools to drop their lawsuit against the state’s voucher program amounts to intimidation and bullying, he said.

“School districts have a duty and responsibility to challenge unconstitutional actions by the state that jeopardize the future of public education,” Gonyer said.

Bowling Green City School District is one of more than 300 public school districts in Ohio challenging the state’s siphoning of public taxpayer money to go to private schools in the form of vouchers.

The public schools have joined together as “Vouchers Hurt Ohio” to sue the state.

So Callender recently introduced [House Bill 671](#) which would allow the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce to withhold state foundation funding from school districts that are part of the Vouchers Hurt Ohio coalition.

Callender now says he is going to request an amendment to the bill so that the department would not withhold all school funding for districts in escrow, but rather only the amount districts are spending on the lawsuit.

This is still intimidation and bullying, according to Gonyer, who reported at Tuesday’s school board meeting on the latest attack by the state.

“This is a gross abuse of power and dereliction of duty,” he said.

Gonyer encouraged those present to reach out to their state legislators, Sen. Theresa Gavarone and Rep. Haraz Ghanbari to voice their concerns.

“We as a community must remind our legislators of their oaths, and their responsibilities to uphold all of the Ohio Constitution, not just the sections that are convenient politically,” Gonyer said.

The director of the Ohio Office of Budget and Management would transfer the amount of withheld funds into an escrow fund and ODEW would only release the funds if the legal action stopped or the school district withdrew from the lawsuit, according to the bill.

CC4265 2.26.26 Thursday

After Callender announced his plan to amend his proposal, Vouchers Hurt Ohio issued a statement saying the bill would still be unconstitutional.

[Vouchers Hurt Ohio filed a lawsuit in 2022](#) targeting the EdChoice private school voucher program, arguing the program has grown disproportionately while resources for public school districts have dwindled.

Lawmakers expanded the Education Choice Expansion eligibility to 450% of the poverty line through the 2023 state budget — creating near-universal school vouchers. K-8 students can receive a \$6,166 scholarship and high schoolers can receive a \$8,408 scholarship in state funding under the expansion.

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