

An article in the July 9, Cleveland Jewish News provided a lot of space for a rant against a bill that would provide a modicum of state regulations for private schools that receive tax money via EdChoice vouchers.

(Please understand that EdChoice vouchers in Ohio violate the Ohio Constitution and no amount of regulation of private schools will change that fact.)

The head of School Choice Ohio, Yitz Frank, is quoted extensively in the July 9, Cleveland Jewish News article (attached). Mr. Frank contends that private voucher schools are already sufficiently regulated. In addition to the article, two letters to the editor are also attached; one letter is by one of the lawyers representing the Plaintiffs in the EdChoice voucher lawsuit and the other by a resident of Cleveland Heights.

Irrespective of Frank's arguments, the public is provided absolutely no information on what taxpayers are entitled to know—how the tax money is spent in private schools. How is the voucher money spent? The auxiliary services money? The nonpublic administrative cost reimbursement money?

[Bill seeks private school voucher accountability](#)

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Rabbi Yitz Frank, executive director of Agudath Israel of Ohio, said one needs to look no further than the name of Take the Dough, We Gotta Know Act, also known as Ohio Senate Bill 443, to understand how the piece of legislation came to be.

"At least one of the co-sponsors and some of the advocates of the bill are very well-known opponents of school choice and generally opponents of private schools and the voucher program," Frank told the Cleveland Jewish News. "This bill sounds well-intentioned and based on the idea of creating a perceived transparency that the bill sponsors, for some reason, believe is needed more than what the law already requires."

Ohio Sens. Kent Smith, D-Euclid, and Bill Blessing, R-Colerain Township, introduced the bill on May 20. It would require Ohio's auditor to audit the funds of each school that is using EdChoice and EdChoice expansion vouchers each fiscal year. The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce would also be required to create a report card for chartered non-public schools, and schools that accept EdChoice vouchers would be required to submit weekly attendance records, conduct criminal background checks of its employees, report the tuition and fees charged by the school in a five-year cost trend, report how many of their students have an Individualized Education Program and publish their dropout and graduation rates.

"We are dedicated to playing the long game if we cannot win the short game for the benefit of Ohioans, Ohio taxpayers and Ohio students." Smith said during a press conference discussing the bill on May 27. "The current voucher system is doing two things: It's providing tuition coupons for wealthy Ohio families to be able to send their children to private schools and it's underfunding Ohio's public school districts with drastic ramifications for Ohio students."

Smith said that over 400 academic positions have been eliminated in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District and over 300 will be eliminated in Columbus before detailing cuts and layoffs for positions across public schools in Ohio.

"These types of cuts are happening all across Ohio not as a result of individual school district mismanagement, there are no school district treasurers going to jail for fraud or sloppy book keeping. This is happening because the legislature of this governor has taken from the many to give to the few.

...Ohioans deserve to know that their tax dollars are being invested in things that matter and will make a difference in their lives, and that level of scrutiny needs to increase as the dollar amount grows.”

Frank said Agudath Israel of Ohio, which represents Orthodox families and day schools, has supported and opposed different legislation that put additional requirements on non-public schools, but its issue with this bill is that the stated reason behind it doesn’t already take into consideration what the law already requires.

“Ohio already regulates private schools and our school choice programs more than almost any similar state in the country,” he said. “They’re required to follow operating standards, have certified teachers background checks, administer standardized tests and are subject to desk audits from the department of education regulated by Ohio’s attorney general. And in addition, they’re requiring things that are going to be super disruptive, not just for schools, but also for families that access choice programs.”

As part of the operating standards, both public and private schools in Ohio follow the same procedures that require what students need to learn, how they are taught and what the safety and health requirements are, according to Frank. The results of standardized tests taken in private schools are publicly available online, as is the financial information of what resources the state provides to a private school and how many students are using a state scholarship.

“A lot of this stuff, in terms of transparency, is already public, and Ohio’s always been further involved in private school administration than many other states,” he said. “These schools are pretty heavily regulated. Now, there are parts of state law that don’t apply to private schools that may apply to different practices within public schools related to curriculum, different levels of teacher licensure and so forth. But private schools do need to maintain their historical independence.”

Many private school administrators are already “used to and are happy with” the state-approved standardized tests they administer to their student body, Frank said, but the new bill would require those students to take the same test as the public schools.

“It would force every student to take the exact same state assessment that, frankly, many public school advocates have been complaining about for years,” he said. “If you talk to private school administrators, their assessment has helped them assess their students’ learning and helped them make changes to help their students to succeed. The bill is framed by sponsors and advocates as wanting more information, but it does far more than that.”

In 2023, Ohio lawmakers increased the EdChoice expansion eligibility to 450% of the poverty line through the state budget – creating near-universal school vouchers, [according to the Ohio Capital Journal](#). Students in kindergarten through eighth grade can receive a \$6,166 scholarship and high schoolers can receive a \$8,408 scholarship in state funding under that move.

The total amount for Ohio’s five private school voucher programs was \$1.09 billion, according to data from the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce, and \$492.8 million of that was from EdChoice expansion vouchers.

Jewish day schools would be able to conform to the testing requirement changes, Frank said, but it would end up being “a pretty big waste of time and resources.”

“But, by and large, Jewish day schools would be OK with this,” he said. “The big question is why are we passing legislation to solve problems that the current law already solves and create entirely new solutions.”

The bill has been referred to the Ohio Senate Education Committee, and it will then need to be reported by that committee to the Ohio Senate, which would then vote on the bill.

Frank said he is “pretty confident” that this bill isn’t going to go anywhere because of the “tremendous amount of public information out there already.”

“It’s important to have an honest conversation, but passing new laws that require both the state and schools to solve problems that have already been solved – there’s a better way to accomplish that,” he said.

Letter to the editor

[School voucher regulation claims ‘utter nonsense’](#)

- Posted Jul 16, 2026 at 10: 00 AM

In your recent front page article about the proposed legislation to require transparency for private schools receiving EdChoice vouchers (“[Bill seeks private school voucher accountability](#),” July 10), you quote extensively from Rabbi Yitz Frank, who claims there is sufficient regulation and disclosure. This is utter nonsense. As one of the lawyers representing the plaintiff school districts in the currently pending litigation regarding EdChoice vouchers, I have learned that there is virtually no regulation or disclosure requirements for the schools which receive the taxpayers’ money through vouchers. There are no audits – none – of the schools receiving vouchers, to make sure the taxpayers’ money is being spent on education. There are no requirements that private schools expose themselves to scrutiny about the level of their students’ accomplishments, since they are not required to give the same standardized tests that public schools must administer.

As a result, currently the state knows nothing about how the voucher money is used, or whether the schools receiving them are providing an education which is either better or at least as good as the local public schools from which they draw their students. That’s why the bill was introduced in the Legislature.

Mark Wallach

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Letter to the editor

[‘Private schools need to be accountable’](#)

- Posted Jul 16, 2026 at 10: 00 AM

States have no business subsidizing private schools with vouchers; it is their job to fund public schools to the level necessary to deliver high quality education to students regardless of the circumstances they come from. Parents are free to send their children to private schools, but they also should bear the responsibility for paying the tuition. It is offensive that religious schools – particularly Jewish schools – misread the First Amendment and think they are entitled to state vouchers for their students.

Until the Ohio State House eliminates school vouchers, I fully support legislation providing oversight of schools that accept and, in many cases, rely on vouchers. As long as private schools utilize vouchers, there is no justification for Yitz Frank’s statement that “private schools do need to maintain their historical independence.” Rather, private schools need to be accountable to the public (“[Bill seeks private school voucher accountability](#),” June 10)

Jennifer Wintner

Cleveland Heights