

SEEDS OF

G
R
O
W
T
H

STORIES OF **HOPE**
2015 ANNUAL REPORT

A Year of Growth & Hope

Every child deserves a quality education. That simple statement is resonating more and more across Ohio as families are standing up and refusing to watch their children fall through the cracks. As a result, the state's scholarship programs are seeing continued growth. And it's not slowing down.

In 2015, School Choice Ohio planted more seeds of growth – seeds that we hoped would help expand the state's scholarship programs to even more Ohio families. We cared for the seeds by meeting with Ohio's leaders and sharing stories of hope. We waited. Then finally, the seeds began to grow, and the impact was tremendous.

For the first time, four of the state's scholarship programs saw an increase in their scholarship amounts. This opened the door for new providers, lessened the financial burden on parents, and allowed more families to take advantage of the programs.

And while these programs are stronger than ever before, there are still many families who are not able to send their children to the school of their choice. That is where School Choice Ohio plays the critical role of advocating for the expansion of quality options so that one day every Ohio child will have the opportunity to attend a great school that is a great fit.

Perhaps the most beautiful part of working in the school choice movement in Ohio is watching the seeds of growth produce even more stories of hope as we hear how these programs are changing lives. Those stories of hope are exactly why we do the work that we do every day, and they are the reason we will continue to plant seeds of growth in 2016 and beyond.

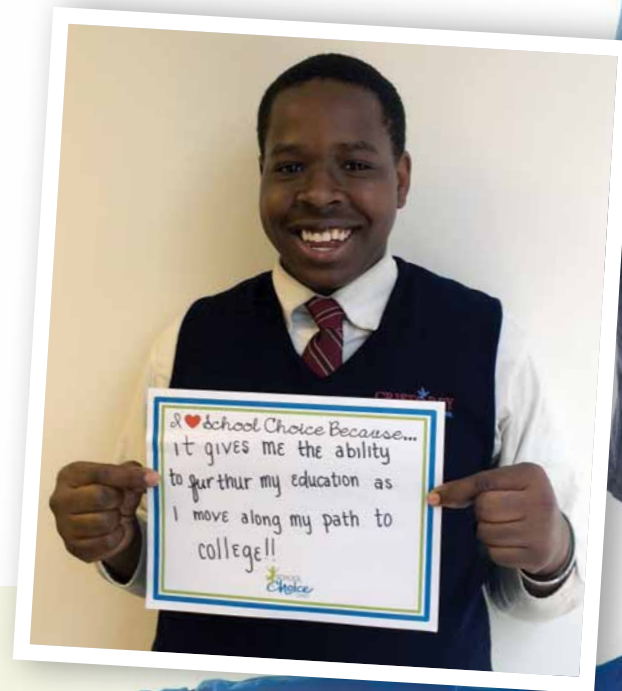
It's going to be a great year. We hope you'll join us. Here's to more stories of hope.

Kaleigh Lemaster

Kaleigh Lemaster
Executive Director
School Choice Ohio

Michael M. Sapienza

Michael Sapienza
Board Chair
School Choice Ohio



Promoting Quality Education Options for Every Ohio Child

School Choice Ohio is the only statewide organization that educates parents on their education options and advocates for the expansion of quality options for every child.



Success Stories

While we heard many inspiring stories in 2015, we were especially lucky to sit down with three moms who were willing to share their stories in hopes of helping more families find the perfect school for their children.



Jennifer

Jennifer's son Alex is 8 years old and has autism. He wasn't doing well in his assigned public school. Jennifer felt trapped and hopeless until she found out about Ohio's Autism Scholarship Program.

"The Autism Scholarship Program gave us an opportunity to craft an educational response to my child. Not to 'Autism A' child, but to my child. And that's what every parent wants—the right answer for his or her child."



Erica

Erica is the mom of four children, including a 9-year-old son who uses the EdChoice Scholarship. Thanks to the scholarship, he is able to attend a school that better fits his needs, and Erica can't believe the changes she sees in him.

"For my family, the EdChoice Scholarship means hope for my children's education."



Jessica

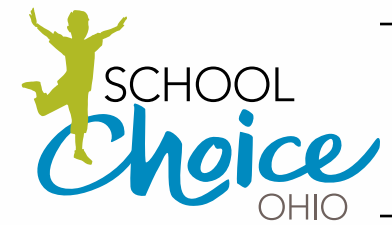
Jessica's son Oliver is 8 years old and has special needs. While his public school did everything it could to get him the services he needed, it just wasn't enough. Thanks to the Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship Program, Oliver now attends a school that fits his learning needs, and he's thriving.

"I want other families to know that the scholarship really does open up a lot of doors. Public school is good for some, but it's not a fit for everyone. For me, it is kind of like a lifesaver."

You can watch all of these stories and more on our YouTube page at www.youtube.com/SchoolChoiceOhio.

Sam's Story

Many of you will remember Sam Myers, one of Ohio's first Special Needs Scholarship recipients. In the summer of 2015, Sam walked across the stage with his graduating class at Mansfield Christian High School. School Choice Ohio was thrilled to have the opportunity to join Sam and his family to celebrate this milestone at his graduation party. As a special surprise, we brought along a video of some of Ohio's biggest school choice champions congratulating Sam on his achievements.



Scholarship Programs

Ohio is home to five scholarship programs that help students in grades K-12 find a great school that is a great fit for their learning needs.

The EdChoice Scholarship Program

is available to any student who is attending, entering or assigned to attend an underperforming public school, as identified by the Ohio Department of Education. Scholarships are worth up to \$4,650 for students in grades K-8 and up to \$6,000 for high school students each year.

The Income-Based Scholarship Program

is available to incoming kindergarten, first-, second- and third-grade students with a family income at or below 200 percent of Federal Poverty Guidelines. Scholarships are worth up to \$4,650 each year.

The Cleveland Scholarship & Tutoring Program

is available to students who live in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. Scholarships are worth up to \$4,250 for students in grades K-8 and up to \$5,700 for high school students, each year.

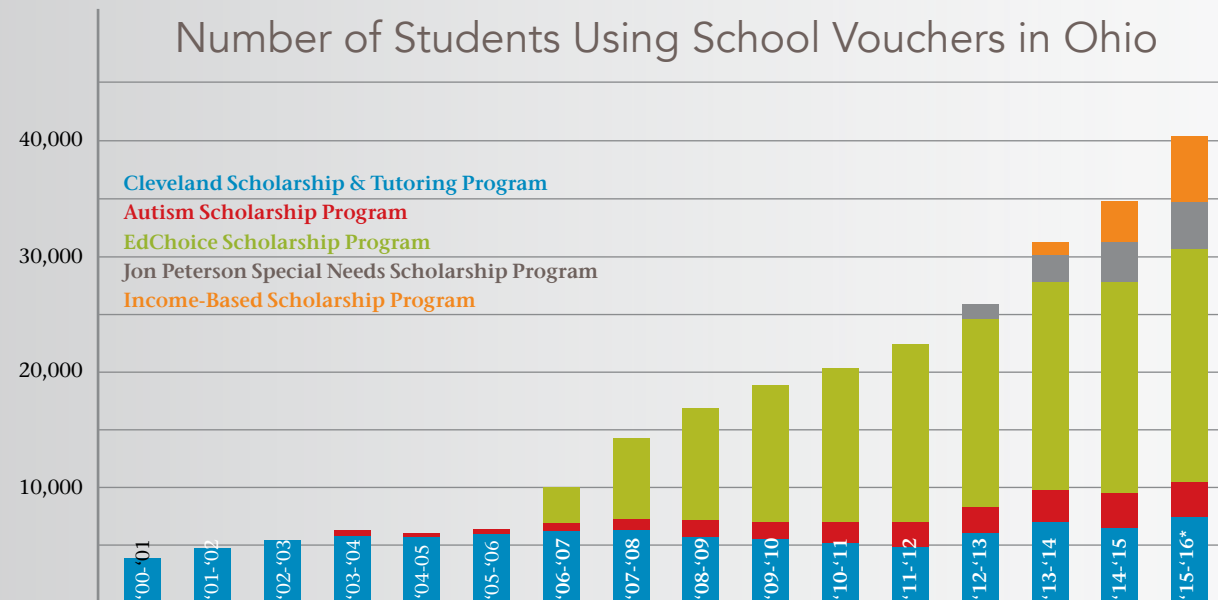
The Autism Scholarship Program

is available to any student between age 3 and either age 21 or high school graduation, whichever comes first, who is identified by the resident public school district as autistic in his or her Individualized Education Program (IEP). Scholarships are worth up to \$27,000 annually.

The Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship Program

is available to any student with special needs in grades K-12 who has an IEP from his or her resident public school district. Scholarships are worth up to \$27,000 each year, depending on the child's special needs.

Number of Students Using School Vouchers in Ohio



Number of Ohio Students Using School Vouchers

The number of students using school vouchers in Ohio increased by almost 17 percent in 2015, from 34,710 to 40,461.

* Preliminary data for 2015-16



Accomplishments

In 2015, School Choice Ohio joined with parents, school leaders, community leaders and other school choice supporters to advocate for funding increases for four of the state's K-12 scholarship programs. Thanks to the help of many dedicated families who shared their stories, wrote and called their legislators and participated in our School Choice Advocacy Day, our voices were heard. The state budget bill that Governor Kasich signed into law in June 2015 included much-needed funding increases for the scholarship programs.

EdChoice Scholarships

were increased to
\$4,650
for students in grades
K-8. For high school
students, scholarships
were increased to
\$6,000.

Income-Based Scholarships

were increased to
\$4,650 for
eligible students.

Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarships

are now worth up to
\$27,000.

Autism Scholarships

are now worth up to
\$27,000.



Thank You!

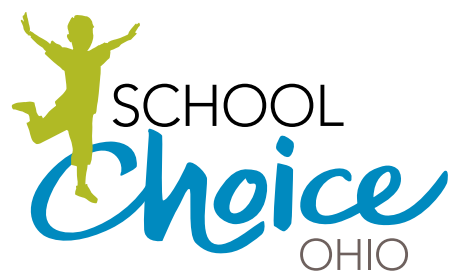
Without a doubt, School Choice Ohio is successful because of the people who stand behind and advance its mission.

We are grateful for the leadership of our volunteer Board of Directors. Their expertise and guidance are critical to the success of the organization. We are thankful for our donors who support our mission and our work. Without them, we wouldn't be able to do the important work we do every day.

We are grateful for our school choice ambassadors who share their stories, testify before state policymakers, speak at events, write letters and so much more. Their work is critical to helping us expand school choice options to more students and inform families about their education options.

We are thankful for our staff members and interns. Our staff is made up of individuals who are truly driven by our mission and work tirelessly to spread the word about school choice. Our interns are dependable and hardworking and are truly valued members of our team.





88 East Broad Street, Suite 640
Columbus, OH 43215

Phone: 614-223-1555

1-800-673-5876

Fax: 614-223-1565

www.schoio.org

info@schoio.org



www.facebook.com/SchoolChoiceOhio



www.twitter.com/SchoolChoiceOH



www.youtube.com/SchoolChoiceOhio



www.instagram.com/SchoolChoiceOhio

