



Dear CISE Donor,

A recent Enquirer “investigation” cast an all-encompassing and negative view of what Mr. Londberg referred to as “private, mainly religious” schools in Ohio, the ineffectiveness of the voucher system, and “meager” results. These broad and misleading statements ignore the fact that each of the 150 Ohio cities and each local school district manages achievement data differently. We at CISE are not concerned with the politics, but we are concerned with the impact of how any misrepresentation of the facts may negatively impact the futures of 2,600 children who attend the 10 inner-city CISE-supported schools and our local Catholic high schools. Many of these students receive a voucher. Without it as a financial resource, these 10 grade schools would likely not exist in our urban core. Evaluating data is important. Understanding the context is vital.

Evaluating data is important. Understanding the context is vital. *Let the facts do the talking.*

FACT 1: CISE supports schools serving families in need. CISE was founded 40 years ago to fund inner-city parish schools in danger of closing due to urban flight. We support 10 schools, including St. Lawrence, mentioned in the August 20th article. 74% of our students are not Catholic, however their *parents seek a faith-based choice*. 94% live in poverty, 85% are minority, and 100% benefit from strong values taught in a *safe, nurturing and welcoming environment*.

FACT 2: CISE students are assessed differently than public schools. It is important to recognize a great deal of preparation is done in the public schools to prepare for the state tests. Our schools do not participate in this preparation. The students take the state test because it is required in order to receive the Ohio Ed-Choice vouchers, but the test is not a priority. Instead every student in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, which includes CISE students, is administered a standardized test annually called the IOWA Assessment. This test is nationally and locally normed and results are received in a timely manner. Data shows not only the level of achievement, but also shows determination of growth for individual students. Principals and teachers also rely on periodic testing, using MAP, AIMSweb and STAR to measure incremental growth, allowing response on a student-by-student basis.

FACT 3: We are educating for life and our results are impressive. CISE acknowledges schooling is challenging, especially for families living in poverty. We help support wrap-around programs, including mental health services and summer enrichment. We ensure a full-time nurse is in every school. We have partnerships that provide athletics, social and emotional development, education for building healthy relationships, and weekend food. Students participate in prayer services and community service. Achievement, though studied and celebrated, is placed in perspective as learning is viewed as a journey.

FACT 4: Our results are impressive. 95% of scholars pass the 3rd Grade Reading Guarantee, 94% of CISE scholars graduating from Catholic high school are accepted into college. Of our Catholic high school graduates, over 70% are enrolled in college, compared to less than 20% of their public-school high school counterparts (students who graduated from 8th grade at a CISE school, but did not pursue a Catholic high school education).

FACT 5: Where schools show areas for improvement, we act. We know we have work to do. For example, our math scores are not on par with our reading scores. Our students often test into lower-level math in high school. In the last two years, we partnered with an agency providing instructional coaching to our teachers. We’ve already seen encouraging results and the program will continue. Our preschools do not all have 5-Star rating by the Ohio Department of Education. We have partnered with experts who are working with our early educators so those preschools advance to higher ratings.

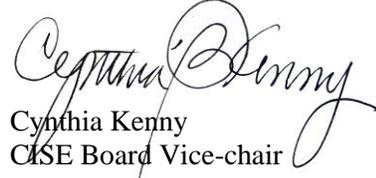
FACT 6: CISE is focused on expanding our reach. CISE does not own or manage the schools. We fund them through loyal and generous donors. In the last 24 months, CISE led interventions to secure the operations of 2 schools, one in partnership with Seton Education Partners, and the other by creating a consortium management pilot model. These interventions were instrumental in securing the doors of these schools remain open. CISE is now supporting +28% more grade school students than just 2 years ago, welcoming St. William and St. Cecilia and growing our family of schools from 8 to 10.

The misleading Enquirer article highlights a problem that faces us in all aspects of life. It is one of balance. We must *balance data with context* to understand results. Policy and politics are an important and necessary debate for the grown-ups. In real time, it is children of our city who need to keep growing and learning. They should be able to plan, not just hope, for a brighter future. Our dedicated principals, teachers, our generous donors, and CISE are making that happen.

Sincerely,



Don Mellott
CISE Board Chair



Cynthia Kenny
CISE Board Vice-chair



Mabe Rodriguez
CISE Executive Director



Dr. Cate O'Brien
Schools Program Director



Supporting 10 Catholic Inner-City Schools

CISEKids.org