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Senate Education Committee

Senate Bill 8

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Chair Lehner, members of the Senate Education Committee.

I am pleased to present Senate Bill 8, legislation that is only two pages long but is an important idea for many school districts across Ohio who want an opportunity to help their schools and provide a better learning environment for their students.

Many of us represent school districts that are unlikely to ever choose to participate in the traditional school construction program, called the Classroom Facilities Assistance Program, under the Ohio School Facilities Commission. For those districts that might receive a small percentage of the cost of school construction from the state, they are looking for another way.

The idea for this concept came from the Superintendent of the Anthony Wayne School District in Lucas County and the Superintendent of Penta Career Center in Wood County. I appreciate their involvement in requesting this option for schools – an option many other school districts have now endorsed.

The best summary of this concept comes directly from the first paragraph of the bill. And the rest of the legislation provides broad jurisdiction for the OSFC to establish the criteria and details of the program.

The bottom line is this. The current school construction program has worked for many school districts, and will certainly provide support for many additional schools into the future. However, it is clear that the program will not help all schools. This idea, to provide funds for school technology or school safety and security for schools that believe that path is best for their students, is worthy of the Senate's careful consideration.

I sincerely hope we can work on its enactment in the first half of 2017 as Senate Bill 8, or perhaps in the budget bill. I thank you for allowing me to get that debate started in earnest today.

