

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman, ranking member Skindell and members of the Senate Finance Committee thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on House Bill 49.

My name is Mark Raiff and I am the Superintendent for the Olentangy Local Schools, Delaware County, Ohio. I am here on behalf of our 21,000 students, their families, and over 2,000 employees. Our district may be the most unique in the great State of Ohio due to circumstances we experience related to school funding and our rapid growth.

In 1990, all of the students in the district attended school in one building for kindergarten through the 12th grade. Students started at the east end of the building for elementary school and graduated from the west end of the building for 12th grade. Today, we have 15 elementary schools, 5 middle schools, 3 high schools and a 4th high school under construction. In 1990, we had approximately 2,000 students and next year we will welcome back over 20,600 students. Our residents have passed numerous bond issues and operating levies to fund this incredible growth.

I know the state faces many challenges and that the current budget is certainly one of those challenges. According to the school funding formula, Olentangy is projected to receive \$51 million; however due to the state share index, our funding is reduced to approximately \$10.5 million. This equals approximately \$570 per pupil, one of the lowest per pupil funding levels in the state. As you are aware, this is significantly below the per-pupil funding level received by chartered non-public or private schools in the state. This funding anomaly has been going on for too long.

For instance, Julie Wagner-Feasel joined the Olentangy School Board in 2006. That year, private schools received \$582 per pupil in Auxiliary Services and \$250 per pupil in Administrative Cost Reimbursement. That same year, Olentangy received \$581 per pupil. We have been trying to catch up to private schools in the way of funding for over 10 years! In the House's version of the budget, private schools will get \$862 per pupil for auxiliary funding and \$405 per pupil for Administrative Cost Reimbursements. Olentangy would get \$571 per pupil in Fiscal Year 18 and \$602 per pupil in FY 19 - still less than half what private schools get.

What are Auxiliary Services? According to the Ohio Department of Education's website: Payments are made on a per pupil basis to the public school district

where the non-public school is located. The public school district, upon requests from the non-public school, provides 1) textbooks, 2) diagnostic, therapeutic, and remedial personnel services, and 3) educational equipment to the non-public school students.

Don't public schools have these same expenses?

What are Administrative Services?

They are exactly what the title states. Annual reimbursement provided to each chartered nonpublic school for the actual mandated service administrative and clerical costs incurred during the preceding school year. Again, we have administrators and clerical employees too. The level of funding being allocated too many districts like Olentangy, below that of the chartered non-public schools is quite simply not fair.

The Olentangy Local School District has been good stewards of the tax dollars provided by the state budget and our taxpayers. If you examine our Cupp-Report you will see that we spend well below the state average and our similar district average in every expenditure category while still maintaining a high level of achievement. We provide an excellent return on investment for our taxpayers. One would think that this type of excellence would be recognized and honored by the state budget with a funding level commensurate with our performance. With a funding level that puts us on a level playing field offered to the private school students who reside in our district.

Thank again for the opportunity to testify today and for your commitment to all the citizens in Ohio.