

**HB 9 – Conference Committee  
February 19, 2020  
Written Testimony**

**Chief Executive Officer**

Eric S. Gordon

**Board of Education**

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Chairman Jones, and members of the Conference Committee on HB 9, my name is Eric Gordon, Chief Executive Officer for the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD). I appreciate the opportunity to share our thoughts on the *Senate passed version* of HB 9. We strongly support language, which reduces the amount earmarked from the Cleveland Municipal School District's state foundation aid for the Cleveland Scholarship Program in FY 2020.

We have serious concerns regarding recent increases to the portion of Cleveland's state aid earmarked for the Cleveland Scholarship Program – specifically a change in HB 166. In the FY 20-21 biennial budget, the General Assembly increased the earmark deduction to \$23.5M in FY 20 and FY 21, a 97% increase since FY 17, even though total scholarship costs remained relatively flat and total enrollment declined.

The Cleveland Scholarship Program is treated differently than EdChoice in that:

- Only first year students are counted for the purpose of generating state funding through the foundation formula. This means the majority of students (greater than 80%) in the Cleveland Scholarship Program do not count in CMSD's state funding calculation.
- CMSD "pays" a flat formula deduction rather than one based on scholarship participation.
- Every school in the CMSD is considered eligible regardless of performance.
- Every student in Cleveland is considered eligible regardless of family income.
- CMSD receives only 40% of the funds necessary to pay for the scholarships (*see table below*), which is significantly less than our peers.

District	State Share Index	FY 19 Cost to District	Approx. Revenue to District	% of \$ District Receives
Akron	0.723586827	6,639,222.00	5,937,261.61	89%
Cincinnati	0.735421547	22,501,126.25	19,735,954.96	88%
Columbus	0.592467641	24,930,254.98	13,275,432.20	53%
Dayton	0.877154079	13,797,483.70	14,660,303.50	106%
Toledo	0.802129581	10,189,217.52	9,832,250.29	96%
Cleveland	0.820772912	17,600,000.00	6,961,301.24	40%

CMSD supports school choice. In fact, our strategy is "Families Choose, Schools Educate, District Supports." But fairness and equity are critically important to the health of the district and its ability to continue to provide options to the community.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am available for any questions or additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "ESG", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Eric S. Gordon

EDUCATOR: Chief Executive Officer  
Cleveland Metropolitan School District