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April 29, 2019

To the Committee of Primary and Secondary Education

CHAIR: Louis W. Blessing III

As educators in Ohio's largest school district, we would like show our support for SB4 sponsored by Sens. Rulli and Kunze. Providing a safe, effective and modern learning environment should be the goal of every school district. Columbus, as a large urban environment, faces a multitude of challenges when it comes to providing funding for updating existing facilities or constructing new schools.

We are special education teachers at Colerain Elementary, which is a school for students with multiple disabilities and orthopedic impairments along with general education students from our neighborhood. Our students are taught in an environment that stresses inclusion, acceptance, and being your best self. The staff and students are dedicated to these ideals, but often our efforts are hampered by factors out of our control such as substandard building conditions, outdated technology and overcrowded conditions.

Some of these factors that we and our students have to overcome on a daily basis include: heat or air conditioning inconsistencies, crowded hallways used as storage for wheelchairs/physical therapy devices that make navigating the school a challenge, classrooms that are not big enough to accommodate the number of students we have with wheelchairs and walkers, inadequate number of restroom facilities for number of students we serve, computer technology that does not work or is outdated or inaccessible to all of our students due to physical limitations, playground facilities and equipment that are inaccessible or not engaging for all students, the presence of rodents and bugs in our classrooms, teachers having to buy school supplies due to shortages and lack of funds for equipment (such as choice making switches and iPads to help all of our students be fully engaged in the learning environment), and lack of dedicated spaces for art, gym, music and instrumental music classes, which is consistently having to relocate to hallways, the library or the cafeteria for practice.

Despite these challenges we are committed to serving our students the best we can every day and always are willing to go above and beyond without hesitation to meet the needs of our students. We are dedicated to fighting for what Columbus students deserve which we think you will agree is the best education possible. Appropriate and equal school funding in the state of Ohio will go a long way to

making public schools great for all of the children of Ohio no matter where they live or their ability level.
Thanks for your support and interest.

Sincerely,

Brian Kraft

Megan Flowers

Chris Williams

Intervention Specialists

Colerain Elementary

Columbus, OH