

Good morning Co-Chairmen, Patterson and Cupp, and members of the finance committee. My name is Doug Ute, Superintendent of the Newark City Schools in Licking County, I also serve on the Buckeye Association of School Administrators Executive Committee, this year serving as the Association President. Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee today, it's been my pleasure to be involved in the Fair School Funding Plan for the past year and a half.

As a lifelong resident of the State of Ohio I benefited from the opportunity to attend public schools in Richland County in the Clear Fork School District.

Along with the Poverty and Preschool sub-committee co-chair Claudia Zaler, I would thank Mike Sobul, Treasurer of Granville Schools, Economist, Howard Fleeter, Aaron Rausch, Ohio Department of Education, and members of the Columbus City Schools Preschool Program for their input on this process.

For the past 33 years I have had the privilege of being an educator four different school districts as a teacher, athletic administrator, high school principal and for the past 19 years as a superintendent.

My experience includes time in a wide range of districts with student enrollments ranging from 600 students in a rural setting in Crawford County to my current district, a more urban setting with a student enrollment of over 6,500 students. The past 10 years I have been blessed to serve as the superintendent of the Newark City Schools in Licking County, a district with over 60 percent free and reduced lunch rate and where it's always A GREAT TIME TO BE A CAT!

POVERTY AND PRESCHOOL

These two topics were considered within the same subgroup because the need to provide economically disadvantaged children with additional support to prepare them for school has been well-documented over the years by several credible research projects.

Twenty two percent of Ohio's school aged children qualify as economically disadvantaged compared to the national average of 19%. It is estimated that 2.5 million Ohio children live in households that earn less than the federal poverty standard for a family of four.

Since the release of the landmark Coleman Report in 1966 it has been well understood that poverty and student achievement are strongly and negatively correlated and students who come from economically disadvantaged homes need additional resources to combat emotional and social needs, as well as academic needs to be successful in the classroom. Ohio's school funding formula has provided additional funding for districts with high concentrations of economically disadvantaged students since the mid-1970s. However, like many other elements of the current funding formula, the adequacy of the current funding mechanism considering the needs of Ohio's economically disadvantaged student's needs to be revisited.

Ohio needs to gather more data to ensure that it is funding the proper academic and social and emotional services in the correct amounts to effectively address the issue confronted by economically disadvantaged students.

After compelling testimony by advocacy groups and individual school districts reporting on their specific programming for economically disadvantaged students, it is recommended that categorical funding for the disadvantaged population should include three components;

1. Additional resources to provide increased social and emotional support to economically disadvantaged children. Statewide and regional shortages of school psychologists and social workers demand that there be flexibility in hiring qualified staff (for example “linkage coordinators”) to provide these necessary support services. Some districts also provide “wraparound” services to low-income children utilizing schools as the focal point for providing an array of health and social services. Expansion of this practice is also recommended.
2. Additional resources to supply on-going academic support services to economically disadvantaged students. These services can include academic intervention and remediation services, dropout prevention, extension of the school day or school year, expanded use of educational technology, and others. Poverty looks different in rural and urban areas, so it is also recommended that districts be allowed flexibility to choose the mix of support services that best meet local needs.
3. Additional district-wide professional development to provide greater insights into the needs of the disadvantaged population and enhanced abilities to recognize and accommodate those needs.

Meanwhile, children mired in poverty need more than Ohio’s annual \$272 per student to keep up their grades and pass exams. Individual tutoring, counseling, social services, and other recommended programs are costly. An add-on equal to 30 percent of the basic aid per student is necessary to curtail dropout rates and help poor children compete with more affluent students in districts across the state. Therefore, the workgroup recommends an additional \$150 per student should be added to the current \$272 on an interim basis, until a detailed study is completed to determine the actual cost necessary to properly prepare an economically disadvantaged child for success.