



**House Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education
House Bill 166 Testimony
Ohio School Boards Association
April 9, 2019**

Chairman Cupp, Chairman Patterson, and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill (HB) 166. I am Jennifer Hogue, director of legislative services for the Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA). OSBA represents public school district boards of education, career-technical center boards of education and educational service center boards of education. Our members of course have a keen interest in the provisions proposed in HB 166 and the recommendations of the Cupp-Patterson workgroup.

Student Wellness & Success Funds

We greatly appreciate Governor DeWine's proposed investment in students through the student wellness and success funds. HB 166 would provide \$250 million in FY20 and an additional \$300 million in FY21. This proposed funding recognizes that all districts have students living in poverty and would distribute the funding to districts based on the concentration of students in poverty residing in the district. Our members have expressed the lack of resources and support to meet the social and emotional needs of students for a number of years. We are extremely grateful that Governor DeWine has listened, recognized the need and deliberately chose to direct the state's resources to serve our students in this way. We believe these funds will go a long way in addressing the nonacademic barriers to student success.

Academic Distress Commissions

HB 166 also proposes revisions to the provisions that govern the state's academic distress commissions. While we appreciate Governor DeWine's interest in improving this process and Superintendent DeMaria's recommendations for change, we would much prefer to have this important discussion outside of the compressed timeline the budget process provides. We urge you to remove these provisions and instead consider the state superintendent's recommendations as a part of the larger conversation taking place around academic distress commissions in the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee and the Senate Education Committee.

Cupp-Patterson Workgroup Proposal

We appreciate the efforts of the chairmen, Representative Cupp and Representative Patterson, as well as all of the members of the Cupp-Patterson workgroup. They met over the course of a year and a half and put in countless hours to create their proposal. There are pieces of the proposal we support, but overall we believe some work needs to be done to address a few areas

before this proposal is ready for adoption.

Base-cost funding

We very much like the methodology used to create the base cost. OSBA has long supported establishing a process for determining the components and costs of a high-quality education. The base-cost proposed by the workgroup accomplishes this goal.

Direct funding of students attending schools of choice

The current practice of deducting funding for charter school students from the state funds provided to traditional public school districts is unnecessary and confusing. We support the workgroup's proposal to fund students directly in the schools they attend.

Funding of districts currently on the cap

We appreciate the move to provide additional funding for districts that are currently capped, especially fast-growing districts. We also appreciate the move toward making sure that districts receive at least the same per pupil amount as chartered nonpublic schools in Ohio receive.

Career-technical education

We also support the workgroup's recommendations to return to a method of funding career-technical education through a base cost weight. This will allow career-technical education funding to grow proportionately with the base cost over time. We are currently waiting for the simulations and bill language to see how Ohio's career-technical education students will be served under the proposal.

Transportation

Pupil transportation presents a significant challenge for many districts. In many areas of the state, students would face great challenges in getting to and from school were it not for the option to ride a school bus. Rural districts often encompass a large geographic area but have low-density populations. Funding for transportation services should incentivize efficiencies and account for specific circumstances among districts. We are waiting to see official language, but from the workgroup's report, it appears as if these goals have been met in the proposal.

Distribution

While we support the above aspects of the workgroup's proposal and the move to isolate each district when determining the state and local share of funding, the work is not complete. We have very real concerns about how this proposal will impact students in poverty, particularly those attending urban districts across the state.

It is no secret that Ohio has an education disparity gap. This gap is disturbing. This gap is real, and this gap must be addressed if we are to move forward as a state. Much more must be done in this funding proposal to move toward closing the education disparity gap that exists for these groups of students.

One can see this very clearly when you look at the 71 districts that receive no new money under the proposal. Of those 71 districts, 19 are among the poorest districts in this state. 104,277 students attend those 19 low-wealth districts. Of those students in the 19 districts, 69.5% are minority students and 94.5% are economically disadvantaged. We can and must do better by these students. We can choose to invest in their success now or we can pay for the consequences of ignoring them later.

Categorical funding

Another way the state has traditionally provided for students and moved toward closing the education disparity gap is categorical funding. Categorical funding allows the state to direct dollars toward meeting certain needs of students (i.e., economically disadvantaged, English learners, special education, gifted funding, etc.)

The workgroup created subgroups that met and explored these individual areas. Many of them resulted in a recommendation for further study. It is prudent to make sure all of the information is gathered before making a decision about how to fund categoricals. However, by moving forward with changes to base cost and distribution while delaying the permanent categorical amounts, we are concerned the education disparity gap will persist.

Educational service centers

We are disappointed with the workgroup's proposal for funding ESCs. This recommendation to increase funding by fifty cents in each year does not go far enough to address the needs of ESCs who provide essential shared services to districts and students across the state. ESCs serve as a vital link and partner in the educational process. ESCs provide a wide variety of direct and support services, including curriculum development, staff development, technology assistance and special education services to the public school districts and students they serve. ESCs save the state of Ohio and school districts money through cost-effective, collaborative ventures that expand equitable access to resources and maximize operating and fiscal efficiencies.

We would like to see the ESC per pupil operating subsidy increased to \$42.52 over the next four years and then recalibrated every four years thereafter. We also support all of the recommendations that will be brought forth by the Ohio Educational Service Center Association in their testimony.

Closing

In closing, I would like to again express our support for the student wellness and success funding and the benefit it will have on our students. We also appreciate the recommendations of the workgroup and stand ready to help address the concerns raised in my testimony to ensure a sound and solid funding formula for our state. Thank you for your attention and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.