

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: 4-8-2019

Name: Lindy L Douglas

Are you representing: Yourself _____ Organization Alexander Local

Organization (If Applicable): Alexander Local School District

Position/Title: Superintendent CORAS

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Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): _____

Specific Issue: Cupp Patterson Funding Formula

Are you testifying as a: Proponent _____ Opponent _____ Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? 20 minutes

Please provide a brief statement on your position: We need to address the 41 districts or 15% of districts that will still not see an increase in state funding. My districts story.

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.

Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education

Fair School Funding Plan

Lindy Douglas- Superintendent Alexander Local School District

April 10, 2019

Good morning Chairman Cupp, Chairman Patterson, and subcommittee members.

State Representatives Cupp and Patterson have been working hard with select Ohio school officials to revamp the Ohio school funding formula. As part of this process let me thank you for carefully considering a methodology that considers the elements that are necessary for children to learn and teachers to teach.

I am Lindy Douglas, the superintendent of Alexander Local School District. Thank you for providing me the opportunity to speak about the impact of the Fair School Funding Plan will have upon my district. Alexander Local School District is a district of about 1,500 students in rural Athens County. Financially, we are on the threshold of poverty in Rural Appalachia with little to no economic development or capacity to create local funding.

I am very appreciative that State Representatives Cupp and Patterson have been working with some Ohio school officials regarding a revamping of the Ohio school funding formula. I have taken time to be present at their meetings of presenting the formula. The first simulations (funding estimates based on projected inputs for enrollment, property valuations, school district resident's income information, etc.) were released. While the theory behind this funding model is most definitely a significant, and positive step in the right direction, (approximately 85% of Ohio districts would be funded by the formula with this model as opposed to approximately 85% of Ohio schools either being on the "guarantee" or "capped" by the current formula), you will see that something I have been saying frequently appears to be holding true. This is excellent work.

Even with this complete change to the school funding formula and the addition of \$1.2 billion for educational funding, Alexander Locals, our children, and community are projected to receive **zero increase** in state funding in either FY20 or FY21 under this model. In other words, we would still be one of the schools remaining on a funding "guarantee" from the State. There could be some potentially good news in that perhaps even though we would still be on the guarantee, we may not be on it "as deep" as we are under the current funding formula (approximately \$1.8 million!). However, that information is not yet known for sure at this time.

This shows that Alexander Local Schools will face significant financial challenges from any funding model that fails to recognize in large part, our school district's

property valuations and resident's income. Based on the property valuations and median incomes of our district, we will still be on the guarantee with no opportunity for additional resources and no security of new revenues coming in. Alexander Local School District has been flat funded by the state for the past 10 years. With the increasing educational costs, growing educational challenges, and focusing on the whole child, our Alexander students' future does not look bright.

While we are a poor rural district in Southeastern Ohio with a high poverty rates of over 30% and economically disadvantage rate of 47.7%, we do have a great community, talented students, and hardworking teachers. Alexander Local School District is on the guarantee by 1.8 million, Column E on the Cupp Patterson formula shows 40% is based on community income, and 60% is based on property valuations. Alexander is also on the threshold of poverty in Rural Appalachia with little to no economic development or capacity to create local funding, along with fighting the drug epidemic, child homelessness, and mental health issues that come with these types of obstacles.

ESSA and No Child Left Behind – We are leaving 15% (71 districts) of our districts and children behind. We have been flat funded year after year with no hope of an increase. How can we justify this to our children? What do we tell our students who are fighting to overcome poverty, opioid addictions in their homes, or the loss of parents to the drug epidemic? I was once told “Oh, you come from the land of the forgotten.” This stuck in my mind and heart for a long time.

I may be from the land of the forgotten, southeastern Ohio, but Alexander Local School District will work endlessly to give our students the best opportunities we can on a very limited budget. Alexander Local School District currently spend \$8900 per child to educate, way less than the state average and many other districts. We have achieved Academic Independent Status state and federally! We cannot keep this academic success up when I will be faced to make additional cuts in a year, freeze salaries, curriculum, or cut bussing 9th through 12th.

Over the past 13 years we have cut over 35 positions from the district, plus cut over a million from our budget, and froze spending. We have cut bus routes, materials, supplies, curriculum, and most of all – opportunities for our children, Ohio's future generation!! Someone stated recently, money doesn't matter in the educational process, it surely does when you have been on a limited budget for over ten years.

On the behalf of the Alexander Local School District staff, students, and community; don't leave us behind. Please consider revising the redistribution formula so that Alexander Local School District students and other districts may benefit from learning opportunities and career pathways. Revise line items of the Cupp Patterson formula to make sure all districts benefit. My students deserve opportunities just as much as all children of Ohio for the 21st century and their future.

Again – Chairman Cupp, Chairman Patterson & the finance committee members, thank you for your hard work, dedication, and time on the new formula. This is tremendous work in the right direction of equal and fair funding. Have a wonderful day.