

Proponent Testimony for H.B. 148 to the House Committee on Education

Guy Munn – Newbury Local Schools, Board of Education Member

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Chairman Bill Hayes, Vice Chair Andrew Brenner, Ranking Member Teresa Fedor, and distinguished members of the House Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer proponent testimony on H.B. 148.

I am Guy Munn and I'm proud to say that I have been a member of the Newbury Board of Education for seven years. My wife, Nancy, and I have raised four sons who have graduated from Newbury High School. Our sons are the third generation of Munn's to have graduated from the current Newbury High School. Nancy, I and my parents are all graduates from the current Newbury High School building. I have three uncles, one aunt and a dozen cousins that are all graduates of Newbury. In addition, my grandmother started her teaching career in Newbury Township in a one room school called the 'Bloody Woods' school house. As you can see my family's history and that of Newbury education are closely related.

Today I ask for your careful consideration and support of HB148 and I want to thank Representatives Patterson and LaTourette for their sponsorship of this important bill.

In asking for your support for HB 148 I am asking you to support more than a bill that assist in the funding of a new school building. I am asking for your support for a new idea and direction in public schools in Ohio. This bill is an important piece in laying the foundation for this new approach to public education in Ohio.

Public education has been a hot topic within the state for several years. We, the school boards and educators of Ohio, have been asked to do more with less, think outside the box, and start with a clean slate . . . and many other worn clichés. Well, we have done just that. We, Newbury Schools, are working with Berkshire Schools, and Kent State Geauga Campus to develop an education opportunity for our students that has not been done in Ohio. Our plan is to build an elementary and high school building on the same ground as the Kent State Geauga Campus. Yes, one campus with the potential to educate a child from kindergarten through college graduation. WOW!

Think of the opportunities to share resources and experiences; facilities, education, extra-curricular activities, teaching, studies and career paths. Yes, this is very much beyond the norm in public education in the state of Ohio. And that is exactly what we want for our communities and our students – experiencing new opportunities in a new environment.

Both Newbury and Berkshire Schools are located in central Geauga County. As is the case with most communities in northeastern Ohio, our school age population is declining at about 3% per year while our senior citizen populations increase. What this points to is that what was the norm in the past will not be the norm of the next decade and beyond.

Committee members, I am not the guy that is going to dazzle you with financial wizardry or baffle you with political bull . . . bologna. What I can tell you is that we, Newbury, Berkshire and Kent State Geauga, have put our heads together to come up with a new innovative idea to improve the educational experience for the children of our communities. And that is the bottom line – providing the best educational experience we can for our children.

Our communities have been and continue to support our schools but, they are feeling that they are not getting much support from the State. Newbury's current taxpayer effort is at 154 with millage of 74.4 and Berkshire is at a taxpayer effort of 110 with 52.3 millage and 1% income tax. So you can see that both of our communities are very supportive of their schools.

The current main high school buildings for both Newbury and Berkshire were built around 1930, yes, 1930 and they are still in everyday use today. Past and current school boards and staffs of Newbury and Berkshire schools are to be commended on the excellent jobs they have done to provide quality education to many generations of students that have walked through the halls of these buildings in the last 85 plus years. But the time has come to move to new facilities, new opportunities and new ways of educating our students.

That Mr. Chairman and distinguished member of the committee is the reason I am here – I ask for your careful consideration and support of HB 148 not just for the potential school buildings that would be built but, rather the future for our children that will be built on this bill's foundation.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully, Guy Munn