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Interested Party—HB 64

Thank you Chairman Cupp, Ranking Member Phillips, and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education for allowing me to provide written testimony as an Interested Party today on House Bill 64.

Governor Kasich's executive budget proposal includes solid considerations for community schools. His proposals, along with HB 2, share a common theme; no matter where a child attends school, we must ensure they are receiving the best education possible. We need to provide our students and parents with quality options to ensure the productive future of our next generation. Today's scholars are tomorrow's leaders.

The budget proposals that OAPCS and its membership support are:

- Prohibiting sponsors selling services that they have an oversight function of to schools they oversee;
- Modifying the Sponsor Review System (SPR) to add an additional rating of poor;
- Opening the ability of community schools to levy property taxes in concert with a district or by themselves, if they have an exemplary sponsor; and,
- Allowing a community school, whose sponsor is rated exemplary, the ability to run a preschool program.

Last but not least is the support for *Community School Classroom Facilities Grant* funding of \$25M. However, we would recommend that the language be expanded to include a two pathway approach allowing individual schools or school networks the ability to access the incentivized funding if they have an exemplary sponsor or if they are high performing schools. This will ensure that the providers of quality education have the chance to take advantage of the program, when in some cases they would be unable to because of their sponsor's rating.

OAPCS does have concern with one provision of HB 64 that would potentially subject charter school board members to personal and several liability for attorney's fees and litigation costs in certain situations. This language could make a single board member who may not have even participated in a particular decision subject to paying the entire judgment obtained against the school for attorney's fees. This kind of exposure will make it very difficult to recruit board members, most of whom serve as volunteers or for minimal compensation. With this in mind, we recommend the following language be pulled from the budget proposal:

"Permits a sponsor who prevails in an action for failure to meet contractual obligations to recover reasonable attorney's fee and other expenses to be paid jointly and severally by the governing authority, members of the governing authority, or from any other plaintiff."

OAPCS would like to go on the record as requesting that the General Assembly amend House Bill 2 to include the four budget provisions detailed above. The holistic House version of charter reform addresses all of the parties involved in the oversight system and provides a solid framework to drive transparency and improved accountability.