



Rock Hill Local School District

• Board Of Education •

Speech to Senate Subcommittee

Introduction- Good Morning Chairman Cupp, ranking member Phillips and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee. It's an honor to be able to speak with you today.

Bullet Points

- *My name is Wes Hairston and I am the Superintendent of Rock Hill Local School District located in Southeast Ohio in the County of Lawrence. I would like to speak to you today regarding the proposed biennial budget and how it relates to my district. Specifically, I would like to speak to you with respect to the "Guarantee" and the impact of the proposed budget as it currently exists.*
- *Our district is \$450,000 into the guarantee, also, under the current budget proposal we will lose an additional \$300,000 over the biennium if this budget proposal becomes law. This is a devastating blow to our district as it would cause further staff reductions and cuts to essential services.*
- *In between fiscal year 2009 and fiscal year 2011, our certified and classified staff was reduced from 261 to 197. This was a result of staff layoffs and attrition. Our certified staff number at the present time is 127 down from the fiscal year 2009 number of 156. Obviously, we have a significant reduction in our programs and services that we have provided to our students in past years. Even though we have had significant staff reductions, our ADM has only decreased by 100 students over the past six years. As a result of these issues, we have become "elective Poor". We can only offer a limited schedule of elective classes to our students at each grade level.*
- *At the close of fiscal year 2011, we closed a "model pre-school" in a cost cutting measure. We eliminated five classroom teachers and five educational aides from our pre-school in order to meet budget. Currently, we offer two handicapped classrooms in our pre-school, down from a total of seven classrooms which also included typical students. We are concerned that the reductions will eventually become an issue with elementary test results. Our*

pre-school gave impoverished students the opportunity to compete with other students who come from less economically depressed households

- *In 2012 our district completed a House Bill 264 project in an effort to reduce our utility costs and to become more energy efficient. As a result, our district has saved about \$350,000 per year in energy savings. The savings has allowed us the opportunity to better meet our financial obligations and provide more educational opportunities for our students.*
- *Our certified and classified staff has made wage concessions and agreed to a cut in health benefits in order to reduce spending in our district. The reduction in health benefits is saving our district over \$200,000 per year. Our unions have consistently worked with our district in an effort to stabilize our financial situation.*
- *At the close of 2012-2013 school year, our district offered a retirement incentive that resulted in nineteen (19) individuals from both unions to retire. Not all positions were replaced and this allowed us to save an additional \$300,000 per fiscal year.*
- *Another factor greatly effecting our financial situation is the new CAUV calculations. Our district is a high poverty rural district which is made up of large areas of unused farm lands and Wayne National Forest and Dean State Forest lands. The tax valuation for these areas have been increased dramatically, however, the taxes paid on these lands will not increase in the same way as a residential property. The millage to generate equal tax dollars in our area would be 3 to 4 times what would be required in many affluent suburban districts in Ohio. This is placing an additional strain on an already overstretched budget.*
- *In closing, a child's education should never be dependent on the wealth of his parents and neighbors. We currently receive \$650,000 less than we received in fiscal year 2009. As a result, we have cut staff, made wage and benefit concessions, and cut programs. While adults can choose to be impoverished, children cannot escape the environment and culture they live in. Education provides opportunity, we respectfully ask for changes in the budget proposal, and to please not eliminate the guarantee at this time.*