



Catholic Conference of Ohio

House Finance Primary & Secondary Education
March 9, 9:30 am
Interested Party
Catholic Conference of Ohio

I Introduction

Good morning Chairman Cupp and committee members. My name is Larry Keough. I am the associate for education at the Catholic Conference of Ohio and legislative advocate for 376 Catholic schools enrolling more than 118,000 students.

II. GRF 200 511 (Auxiliary Services) & GRF 200 532 (Administrative Cost Reimbursement)

As each of you may know, Catholic and other chartered nonpublic school students benefit from Auxiliary Services and schools receive Administrative Cost Reimbursement if they hold charters from the State Board of Education and meet Ohio's Operating Standards, as prescribed by the State Board of Education.

The chartering process is a great example of a quid pro quo: The state is ensured chartered nonpublic schools adhere to the Operating Standards; schools receive funding and services for their students in the name of the Child Benefit Theory.

Parity Principle – The Governor and the General Assembly, as a matter of practice, have approved percentage increase for Auxiliary Services and Administrative Cost Reimbursement Services by the same increases for basic aid for public school students.

This is known as the parity principle, though it is not statutorily required.

In the proposed budget, GRF 200 550 – state aid for public school students – is increased 2.9 percent in FY 2018 and 2.2 percent in FY 19, while Auxiliary Services and Administrative Cost Reimbursement are flat lined.

We need the increases for the same reasons public schools do: increases in costs associated with staff, services, and material resources.

We ask for your favorable support of the parity principle while keeping in mind that Catholic and other chartered nonpublic schools save the taxpayers of Ohio

millions of dollars in educational costs that the state would pay if these students were attending public schools.

First-time cap on Auxiliary Services – There has been no cap on Auxiliary Services since its inception for the 1967-1968 school year. However, the Executive Budget proposes a cap to limit the pupil amount at \$862.

We request the cap be removed and for Auxiliary Services to receive the same percentage increase as afforded for public school student aid.

Added student service for Auxiliary Services We are recommending to add services for English language learners. Catholic and other chartered nonpublic schools are enrolling increasing numbers of students whose first language is not English.

There is no financial impact to this change. It is simply an extension of the services that can be provided under the Auxiliary Services Statute.

Restoring the cap in ACR to \$420 per pupil -- In 2015, the cap in ACR was adjusted to \$420 per pupil. The cap was set at that amount to allow for future increases in which schools can access the full appropriation – number of students/ ADM – multiplied by the cap.

III. **Scholarship Programs**

A school-choice scholarship bill has been introduced in the Senate that would create income-based scholarships for K-12 students. The bill would absorb Ed Choice Scholarship students, Ed Choice Expansion students and Cleveland Scholarship students into a single program entitled the Ohio Opportunity Scholarship. The Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship Program and the Autism Scholarship Program are to continue as stand-alone programs.

If this bill were to receive favorable passage, it would be established for the 2018-2019 school year. All five of Ohio's school choice programs will be operational, at least for the 2017-2018 school year.

Working from funding levels in the executive budget, our following recommendations are to ensure that funding is sufficient for the programs at least over the next school year:

Increase the scholarship amounts in the Cleveland Scholarship Program from \$4,250 for K-8 students and \$5,700 for high school students to the levels in the traditional Ed Choice and Ed Choice Expansion programs, which are \$4,650 for K-8 and \$6,000 at the high school level.

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Consultation with the ODE leads us to believe that amounts set aside in the Executive Budget for the Cleveland Scholarship Program are sufficient to accommodate the increases.

Consultation with ODE also leads us to believe that amounts in executive budget for Ed Choice Expansion are sufficient for adding grades per statute in FY 18 and FY 19.

Recommendations for the Disability Scholarship Programs:

Students on Jon Peterson and Autism scholarships are to be counted in Child Find;

Clarifying language that students in both programs can have Service Plans;

Amend the Jon Peterson Program for all-year open application commensurate with ASP;

Clarifying language for students whose accommodations do not offset their disabilities to accurately reflect their cognitive ability on a state test to be exempt from state testing requirements.

Conclusion – I would be pleased to answer any questions at this time.