

Before the Ohio House Finance Committee  
Interested Party Testimony on Sub. House Bill 305  
December 1, 2020

Co-Chairman Oelslager, Co-Chairman Callender, Vice Chairman Scherer, Ranking Member Cera and members of the Ohio House Finance Committee:

I am writing today to offer interested party testimony on the Fair School Funding Plan, Substitute House Bill 305. The business community is thankful to the sponsors in the House and Senate for their commitment and work on this important legislation. We applaud many elements of this bill and appreciate the consistent collaboration among Statehouse leaders and communities across the State of Ohio to advance our education system. While we are in favor of many aspects of this bill, we want to address a specific concern over the manner in which non-traditional schools receive funding, particularly that independent, public STEM schools will face a major reduction in funding under Sub. HB 305 and SB 376. We must maintain and enhance the progress we have made in funding for STEM and begin to make strides to eliminate the disparities in financial support for high-performing charter schools.

The Columbus Partnership is a non-profit, membership-based leadership organization of 75 chairpersons, chief executive officers, and senior executives from the region's leading businesses and institutions. Our members include 15 Fortune 1000 CEOs, as well as the leaders of the nation's largest university and world's largest research and development organization. Our focus on talent, workforce and prosperity for the Columbus Region must be accompanied by a strong commitment to innovative, forward-thinking education models. Leading in science, technology, engineering and mathematics will prepare Ohio's young people to take on the significant challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The State of Ohio's commitment to better equity in high performing charter and independent school funding will serve as an important piece in a new plan.

Institutions that prioritize STEM education, including KIPP Columbus, Metro Early College Middle School and High School, the Dayton Regional STEM School, Bio-Med Science Academy and the Global Impact STEM Academy, would be seriously impacted if they receive an approximate 10 percent cut under the new plan. Additionally, there is concern that the current legislation provides funding for non-traditional schools in the form of a separate line item, which would put STEM school funding in consistent jeopardy given a new administration's or legislature's prioritization of funding schools of choice.

Our goal to provide a long-term vision for achieving greater economic prosperity has positioned Columbus to be one of the strongest environments to attract businesses and investment in the world. A major factor in the success of our community and the State of Ohio will continue to be our collective focus on innovative education. This funding formula, which has been undertaken through hard work and dedication by leaders in the House and Senate, seeks to address equity concerns in education across the state. Through this model, we should work together to ensure that independent STEM school students receive the same funding amount so that those students can thrive.

Thank you for your consideration.

Alex R. Fischer  
President and CEO  
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