

Lordstown Local Schools (Terry Armstrong, Superintendent)

Testimony as introduced June 5, 2019

Before the Ohio Senate Finance Committee

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chairman Burke, members of the Senate Finance Committee: good morning. My name is Terry Armstrong, Superintendent of Lordstown Local Schools. I understand that testimony was provided by schools last week about school funding components of the state budget. Due to obligations at our district I was unable to attend and appreciate the opportunity to testify today. While the proposal for Student Wellness and Success funds are a great start and addresses a high need area, they do not address inherent issues in the school funding formula. In reference to the Student Wellness and Success funding, like many school districts, I would recommend flexibility for districts to spend funds specifically on school counselors and school psychologists.

In regards to the formula itself, unlike the current formula that results in 82% of districts being funded outside the formula through funding guarantees and funding caps, the ideas of the Fair School Funding Plan gets it right! The proposed formula is based in research, best practices and addresses what it actually costs in 2019 to provide an education and necessary support services to students in our districts. The Fair School Funding Plan also addresses local share capacity using more of an emphasis on the income levels of the people who live there and not just property wealth.

The current formula and school finance decisions in Ohio has resulted in many challenges for Lordstown Schools. Lordstown Schools is dealing with the phase out of the formerly locally generated Tangible Personal Property taxes that had made up about a quarter of our district's budget. Once the phase out of the reimbursement dollars for the TPP taxes is completed the losses at our district will be over \$20 million dollars since TPP taxes were eliminated until the completion of the phase out.

Lordstown Schools also finds itself in the situation about 120 districts across Ohio find themselves: we are subject to the gain cap. This results in Lordstown Schools losing about \$800,000 this year and projected nearly \$1 million dollars next school year. This represents about half of the income we would get from the State of Ohio using the current formula and results in the district receiving about \$2,500.00 per student from the State of Ohio. These are resources meant to be put in the classroom and serving students in Lordstown and other districts throughout Ohio and not lost due to capping a broken formula.

Lordstown Schools, and the frankly the entire Mahoning Valley, is still reeling from the announcement by General Motors to idle production at its Lordstown manufacturing facility. We remain hopeful to be selected for the production of future vehicles and remain engaged in supporting those efforts. The timing of fairness in school funding could not be more important to Lordstown Schools.

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chairman Burke, members of the committee...our school and our community need your help. We have great students, a passionate and hard-working staff and a wonderful community. It is a great place and I welcome any of you to visit. The implementation of the ideas in the Fair Funding School Formula introduced in the House by Representative Cupp and Representative Patterson will result in Lordstown and other districts having a much more predictable and stable future. The components of the plan, including elimination of the funding cap, will make a difference in our community and throughout the state of Ohio.

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chairman Burke, members of the Committee...I am happy to take any questions you may have. Thank you for the opportunity today.