

Mike DeWine, Governor  
Paolo DeMaria, Superintendent of Public Instruction

## **Information about H.B. 170/S.B. 111 for the House Primary & Secondary Education Committee**

Paolo DeMaria, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Ohio Department of Education  
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Chair Manning and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide some additional information about House Bill 170/Senate Bill 111. Below, you will find an explanation of the federal financial resources for schools and districts to support their efforts in light of the ongoing COVID pandemic and the need for this legislation to appropriate these funds.

### **Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) – Fund 3HS0 (line item 200640): \$683.1 million**

Schools and districts have benefited from a substantial infusion of federal financial support in response to the impacts of the COVID pandemic. This support has been in addition to the usual federal financial support for education. The largest source of federal COVID relief funding for schools and districts has come from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund, which is a grant funded through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. These funds have supported the new and unexpected costs associated with both remote learning and the safe and responsible resumption of in-person learning. These funds have been critical in supporting the continuity of educational services for students.

Ohio's award was \$489 million, and 90% of funds were allocated to traditional school districts and community schools based on the proportion of Title I funds the schools received. Title I funds are allocated based on the level of poverty in each district, so schools with higher economically disadvantaged populations receive greater funding. Like all federal grants from the U.S. Department of Education, schools are paid on a reimbursement basis, and submit claims for reimbursement as they incur eligible expenses. Schools are able to access the first round of ESSER funds for expenditures from March 13, 2020 through September 30, 2022.

While the Controlling Board appropriated funds in FY21 for ESSER, they were statutorily limited to appropriating \$180 million. At the same time, schools and districts have had access to the full \$440 million allocated to them. While we expect schools to use these funds over the course of a few years, as of late February, ODE had used all of the available appropriation authority. This means that we have had to defer paying claims for reimbursement. HB 170/SB 111 would establish appropriation authority for the remainder of these ESSER allocations and would support our timely payment of claims. As of March 12, more than \$47 million in claims for reimbursement are pending.

In December, Ohio was awarded an additional \$1.99 billion in federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act enacted by Congress. The ESSER II allocation relied on the same calculation as ESSER I, and 90% of the

total award was allocated to traditional school districts and community schools based on their share of Title I funds. Schools received access to these funds last month.

While schools have through September 2023 to access these funds, it is critical that the state establish sufficient appropriation authority to ensure the Department is able to provide funds to schools and districts as they submit claims for reimbursement. H.B. 170/S.B. 111 would establish approximately \$400 million in appropriation authority of the total amount allocated under ESSER II. The additional appropriation authority *does not* represent *new* federal allocations for schools but allows schools and districts to access these funds.

In addition to school reopening, we are expecting that these funds will play a significant role in the expanded efforts by schools and districts to make up for lost learning opportunities and reach readiness for the new school year. Schools and districts will have several years to use these funds, so they can also contribute to fundamental changes to education that can create even greater improvement and outcomes for students and our state.

Finally, it's worth noting that last week, Congress passed the American Rescue Plan. This funding is expected to provide an additional \$4.5 billion to Ohio, with 90% of the funds allocated to schools and districts, again using the Title I formula as the basis of the allocation. These funds are required to be allocated within 60 days of the federal government's award of these funds to Ohio.

**Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER) – Fund 3HQ0 (line item 200627): \$19.05 million**

The appropriation authority requested for the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund will provide additional unallocated funds from GEER I to Joint Vocational School Districts, Educational Service Centers, and County Boards of Developmental Disabilities. Unlike traditional districts and community schools, these educational entities did not automatically receive subsidy funds under either ESSER I or ESSER II. The Controlling Board previously provided \$25.6 million in per pupil funding to these entities last fall, and H.B. 170/S.B. 111 provides an additional \$19.05 million for these entities. The allowable uses for these entities are consistent with the allowable uses under ESSER.

**Emergency Assistance for Non-Public Schools (EANS) – Fund 3HQ0 (line item 200651): \$154.9 million**

In the supplemental COVID relief bill passed in December 2020, Congress included a new grant program for nonpublic schools. Ohio received approximately \$155 million to reimburse nonpublic schools for prior expenditures and provide services to these schools moving forward. An application for nonpublic schools to apply for these funds opened earlier this month with the goal of awarding service level amounts by early April. The Department is working with Educational Service Centers to help provide services to the non-public schools that apply.