

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee: I thank you for the opportunity to present written testimony regarding a couple components of House Bill 334: the proposed per meeting compensation increase for school board members and having board of education members complete training on ethics, public records, and open meetings at the beginning of each term.

As a two-year member of the Washington Local School District's Board of Education (Lucas County, Toledo, Ohio), I have found that the time required to be properly informed and prepared for each school board meeting continues to grow. I'm not complaining: it is part of the job I ran for and was elected to do, and will continue to do.

Your consideration of increasing compensation comes at a time when many school board members incur additional expenses to serve our communities: babysitters, using personal/vacation time, upgrading phone/technology plans, etc.

In addition to having full-time jobs, attending scheduled board of education meetings, student awards ceremonies, open houses, athletic events, and other student or district-related gatherings, each of my fellow board members and I sit on at least two committees that serve our school district: curriculum, facilities, finance/operations, communications/technology, student services, and human resources. Each committee meets monthly (for the most part) and is an essential component in preparing for the board of education meetings.

Addressing COVID for the last 18 months has required more time and research on how to keep schools open and students and staff safe. This has been an exacerbating year, and all school board members and administrators have been thrust into navigating and making decisions none of us could have ever imagined. But, be assured, we are exercising due diligence and doing the job for which we were elected.

The HB 334 suggestion of having board of education members complete training on ethics, public records, and open meetings at the beginning of each term, is a good reminder of our roles and responsibilities as elected officials, and ensures accountability with our constituents.

Thank you for your consideration of these issues. I believe an increase in compensation for Board of Education members reflects an appreciation and the value of prepared, qualified school board members who are serious and committed to honorably serving their districts and communities.