

October 26, 2021

Columbus Board of Education  
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House Primary and Secondary Committee  
RE: House Bill 334 Proponent Testimony

Thank you Chair Manning, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson and members of the House Primary and Secondary Committee for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 334. My name is Michael Cole, and I am representing Ohio's largest school district as a member of the Columbus City Schools Board of Education.

Today's School Board Members throughout Ohio perform the paramount tasks of policy making, fiduciary oversight, and generative work that entails tax authorization, strategic planning, direct report evaluations, advocacy, and community engagement to govern. Therefore, lifting the \$5,000 cap on Board member compensation is a key first step towards ensuring fair and equitable pay. Our respective members, like so many others, bring uniquely advanced backgrounds and perspective to this part-time and stipend public service. These advanced experiences involve legal, executive level management, operations, public policy, municipal government, mass media, instructional education, and finance. Columbus City Schools Board of Education places tremendous value on talented candidates with advanced skills capable of providing the best governance on behalf of the children and families of our great city's learning community. Such work requires members of our Board to meet four times monthly on average between regular or special Board meetings and committee work. Thus, removing the annual salary cap while raising the compensation for meetings attended is critical to attracting competitive and competent candidates who are eager to knowledgeably serve amidst the growing needs of providing for the "whole child" in districts throughout Ohio.

To further ensure that every board member is fully prepared to govern responsibly, ongoing education is vital to the Boards of Education that are charged with making critical decisions to carry out their district's mission statement or community declaration. Additional decisions such as ethics training, monitoring student achievement, and governing budgetary matters require regular training and development.

To run a government means it is essential for its leaders to gain knowledge on these important topics. I am personally thankful for the work and support of organizations like the Ohio School Boards Association in providing access to high quality or customized professional development

through shared best practices and guidance. Investment in this type of Board development can potentially produce stronger positive outcomes for our children and communities.

In final, government service is to ensure transparency, accountability, and access to the public. This means ensuring all Boards of Education understand Ohio's Ethics Requirements and Open Meeting Laws. Requiring this training annually, not only enhances compliance, but public trust and accountability. Meeting this requirement is important, as both the Ohio Attorney General's Office and Ohio Ethics Commission make training available in virtual or recorded formats. Continuous growth and development through education pushes Boards of Education to be conscious and proactive, rather than complaisant and reactive. When leaders have set a standard for behavior modeled for the entire organization, it becomes embedded as expectation and refining practice. I greatly encourage this committee to advance our local Boards of Education with opportunity and resources to compensated more comparably to our work, and become better educated in our broad elected roles. I respectfully you to support this legislation. Thank you again.