



Sarah Fowler Arthur
State Representative

Chairman Merrin, Vice-Chairman Riedel, Ranking Member Sobecki, and members of the Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on HB 323 today.

HB 323 would authorize a personal income tax credit for certain education expenses of up to \$1,500 per qualifying child to the parent or educator who expended the funds during that tax year.

Education expenses may include: expenses or fees for books, supplementary materials, supplies, tutoring, educational field trips, or lessons, including for music, art, or kinesthetic learning. However, the credit would NOT apply to expenses or fees for tuition, room or board.

The credit would apply to ALL Ohio students in primary or secondary education, whether they attend public, private, religious, or home schools. The education tax credit would allow teachers and parents, through receipt documentation, to deduct the actual expenses of education materials or enrichment opportunities from their personal income taxes.

While parents and teachers have always supported student's primary and secondary education expenses, there is an additional recognition of the expenses born during the past two academic years which were disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The needs are expected to continue as many families pay for tutoring to close gaps that may have emerged due to education disruption.

Additionally, many students want to explore kinesthetic learning opportunities, such as art, music, dancing, wood working, cooking, cake decorating, or other skills that enrich their lives and equip them with tools to earn future income. This education tax credit would allow a family to take up to \$1,500 as a non-

refundable income tax credit toward those expenses. In a day and age where employers want employees who have creative thinking skills, tactile abilities, and a strong work ethic, what better way to encourage these skills than to give students an opportunity to explore their interests?

Teachers from public, private or religious schools are also included in this tax credit as many, especially at the elementary grades, use their own funds to purchase classroom supplies like glue, stickers, and construction paper for crafts or hands-on projects, pay their own way for field trips (often at a reduced rate but these expenses do add up!), purchase supplemental reading materials or educational games for their classroom to reinforce lesson concepts. Under the proposed education tax credit, teachers would be able to deduct documented expenses up to \$1,500 per child per tax year.

The tax commissioner would have the authority to request documentation of actual expenses through receipts to ensure accountability for the funds being deducted from the teacher or parent's tax liability. This section was patterned off the former federal education income tax credit, which is no longer available.

It is my hope that this Education Tax Credit will support families and teachers in Ohio who are striving to provide their children and students with robust education opportunities, and perhaps open the door to some students who may not otherwise have been able to afford the enrichment offered by these extracurricular opportunities. Let's not punish teachers and parents for their generosity and investment in our kids' futures.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and I look forward to any questions you may have.