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House Bill 33: FY24-25 Operating Budget

House Finance Subcommittee on Primary & Secondary Education

Chair Richardson

Ranking Member Isaacsohn

Members: Dobos, White, Robinson

Testimony submitted by:

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Ohio Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs

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Chairwoman Richardson, Ranking Member Isaacsohn, and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education. My name is Adam Shank and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs. I want to take a moment to thank the Governor and members of the House and Senate for their steadfast support of the Clubs over the years. Through your work and support, the clubs are making significant impacts on the lives of the youth we serve.

If a student in Ohio has access to a Boys & Girls Club, they have access to more hours of structured programming out-of-school than they do in their local classroom. Using out-of-school time to build communities of learning and increase access to academic resources is critical. It is also effective.

The past few years have had a profound impact on education, leading to widespread learning loss and a need for academic recovery. A recent study found that students have lost an

average of six months of learning, with low-income and minority students being hit the hardest (COVID-19 and Learning Loss: An Unprecedented Crisis in America's Schools, 2020). To address this challenge, it is essential to provide students with access to high-quality, evidence-based programs and resources that support academic recovery.

Boys & Girls Clubs have a long history of providing high-quality, evidence-based programs and activities designed to support academic success. Studies have consistently shown that participation in Boys & Girls Clubs is associated with improved academic outcomes. A systematic review of research studies found that Boys & Girls Clubs have a positive impact on youth outcomes, including academic achievement, higher grades, and better performance on standardized tests (The Impact of Boys & Girls Clubs on Youth Outcomes, 2017). A meta-analysis of research studies found that participation in after-school programs, including Boys & Girls Clubs, was associated with improved academic outcomes, such as higher test scores and better grades (The Effectiveness of After-School Programs for Improving Academic Outcomes: A Meta-Analytic Review, 2007). Furthermore, in delivering these academic outcomes, Clubs have documented a positive return on investment for the state of Ohio. In fact, for every \$1 that state invests in Boys & Girls Clubs, Ohio communities recognize a return of \$11.35 (Institute for Social Research and the School of Public Health at the University of Michigan, 2015).<sup>1</sup>

For this reason, the Administration and General Assembly utilized one-time federal dollars to partner with Clubs in Ohio to expand services and promote academic recovery in high-need rural, Appalachian, and urban areas. The impact of this one-time investment resulted in growth to

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<sup>1</sup> Preliminary results from an ongoing Social Return on Investment Study by the Ohio University Voinovich School indicate that the return on investment for Ohio is likely significantly higher today than it was when the University of Michigan study was conducted. The final report of this study is expected in August of next year.

more than 100 Club sites across the state, a 33% increase in service area, and a service capacity of more than 60,000 Ohio kids, a 300% increase from early pandemic levels. Many of these new sites and service areas were established in direct partnership with local school districts. Additional partnerships are underway to provide mobile Club programming in hard to reach rural and Appalachian areas where access to services is limited.

The ongoing funded partnership with ODE additionally resulted in an increase of 1,714 sq miles in service area, 3,482 more program hours, support for 678 educators in eliminating barriers to learning, the engagement of 12 new school districts, and the establishment of 46 new partnerships to assist academic programming efforts in some of the highest need areas of the state.

Some of the one-time federal relief programs used to fund this necessary investment in academic programming in Ohio have already been exhausted. The remainder are set to conclude before the end of the next biennium. In all Clubs in Ohio will need to mitigate a \$20.4 million reduction in funding when federal programs such as GEER and ESSER run their course.

To ensure the sustainability of successful programs, the Ohio Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs is requesting an allocation of \$3.5 million in each fiscal year, administered by the Ohio Department of Education, to support the ongoing establishment and expansion of Club programming in underserved areas of the state and to support academic programs to address learning loss. This allocation would be the continuation of the ongoing partnership with ODE, but a new investment of state funds as opposed to federal dollars. Coupled with a more restrictive increased earmark of federal pass-through TANF dollars included in the Governor's proposed

version of the bill, this amount will ensure the continued support and expansion of evidence based academic programs.

The influx of federal dollars through programs such as ESSER and GEER provided not only emergency relief on a broad scale, but also the opportunity to explore new models of academic programming. As these federal programs end but the needs of Ohio's youth continue, it is imperative that the state continue to support impactful programs in a fiscally responsible way. One that is focused on outcomes and return for Ohio's communities and tax dollars. At the requested amount, annual academic programming could be provided at the cost of \$58.33 per student and generate a documented return of \$39,725,000 in economic benefit for the state.

State funding for Boys & Girls Clubs is an investment in the future of communities and the well-being of our youth. Boys & Girls Clubs have a proven track record. Clubs in Ohio have evolved beyond mere community-based organizations to become state partners in addressing youth issues. If you want to have positive impacts on state outcomes in academic recovery, youth mental health, and college/career readiness, an investment in Boys & Girls Clubs is sound state policy with a documented ROI. Therefore we humbly request the addition of the aforementioned allocation in the House version of HB 33.