



AN ALLIANCE OF OHIO'S URBAN SUPERINTENDENTS AND TEACHER UNION PRESIDENTS

**House Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education
Interested Party Testimony HB 33**

Offered by Paul Palomba

**Co-Chair of the Ohio 8 Coalition & President of the Canton Professional Educators Association
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Chairwoman Richardson, Ranking member Isaacsohn and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education, my name is Paul Palomba, Co-Chair of the Ohio 8 Coalition and President of the Canton Professional Educators Association. I am here today on behalf of the Ohio 8 Coalition, which is an alliance of the Superintendent and teacher union Presidents for Ohio's eight urban school districts. We are an interested party testifying on **HB 33**. For brevity, our testimony begins with in five succinct priorities and related positions that outline matters that are of most interest and concern. The balance of our testimony goes into more detail as needed.

Budget Priorities & Positions

- 1. SUPPORTS the Fair School Funding Plan:** specifically, to update the inputs for the base year from 2018 to 2022; complete the study related to costs and economically disadvantaged students and to make the existing temporary law permanent to ensure the plan's long-term viability.
- 2. AGAINST Vouchers:** and any continued expansion of any and all voucher programs. Vouchers have never been proven to improve academic performance, further inequities, and establishes a costly and redundant set of operational and administrative burdens for all parties involved
- 3. With specific changes SUPPORTS Science of Reading:** including continued funding to support existing professional development efforts and establishing specific standards to qualify as an ODE literacy coach. All of the Ohio 8 school districts engage in pedagogy reflected in the Science of Reading pedagogy.
- 4. SUPPORTS Student Wellness and School Based Health Center funds:** as outlined the Executive Budget.
- 5. SUPPORTS School Resource Officer:** funding (which is partial based on State share) to help curb the cost of these positions.

- 1. Fair School Funding Plan:** The Governor's Executive Budget has suggested a continued phase in of Years 3(50%) and 4(66%) of the 6-year Fair School Funding Plan. Legislators, are considering TWO options below to modify the Governor's proposal.

- a. Accelerate school funding amount to reflect funding beyond Years 3 & 4 meaning approximately 55% for Year 3 and 70% for Year 4.

OR

- b. Update the base amount from 2018 funding levels to another year

POSITION:

1. Update the base amount from 2018 to 2022 funding levels.
2. Complete the study related to costs to educate economically disadvantaged students, which is the only study that has not been completed.

2. **Vouchers:** For the past 20 years, the voucher program has expanded from a limited program for students of a particular income level to one that, at the proposed 400% of FPL, would include 80% of all students in Ohio.

- a. Vouchers remain unproven and are counter to the concept of public education.
- b. Voucher funds can be used for private, parochial, and charter schools which do not have the same accountability regarding the use of public funds.
- c. Under this expansion, some children already in non-public schools will use taxpayer dollars to supplant their existing tuition payments.
- d. The cost of this expansion could be as high as \$172 million per year but only \$25 million is included in the budget.

POSITION:

1. Ohio 8 does not support the continued expansion of vouchers.
2. There must be accountability for public funds used for vouchers including but not limited to reporting the use of those funds by each school building that receives such funds.
3. Require that public record laws apply to school buildings, charter school, private school and parochial schools that accept voucher funds including but not limited to organizational budget documents, board meeting minutes, and any financial information that is required of traditional public schools to produce within the context of public record requests.
4. Reporting of academic performance of students receiving voucher funds.

3. **Literacy Initiative: Science of Reading:** The Governor's Executive Budget recommends the use of evidenced based literacy instruction and educator professional development; funding to support literacy coaches; educator and administrator professional development and dyslexia screenings.

POSITION:

1. The Ohio 8 already utilizes evidenced based literacy instruction and educator professional development utilizing the science of reading pedagogy and is supportive of this recommendation.
2. Funds dedicated to literacy instruction and professional development should be allocated to districts already deploying science of reading including \$1,200 stipends for K-5 teachers, English language arts teachers in grades 6-12, intervention specialists, and instructional coaches and \$400 stipends for middle and high school teachers in other subject areas.

3. Literacy coaches deployed by ODE should have at least:
 - a. 10 years of teaching reading as a reading specialist
 - b. Proven track record of successful experience as a literacy coach
 - c. Proven and successful experience is defined as higher-than-average peer reviews as well as at least annual unannounced observations of that coach during that experience timeframe.
 - d. Experience must be in the same type of school districts in which they will be placed

4. Student Wellness and School Based Health Center funds: The Governor's Executive Budget provides funding for mental health services, and physical health care services, including telehealth services. Additionally, The Department of Education will support school-based health centers in partnership with the Ohio Department of Health with a line of \$15M per year.

POSITION:

1. The Ohio 8 supports the Governor's Executive Budget Student Wellness funding for student behavioral and physical health needs around the state.
2. The Ohio 8 supports Governor's Executive Budget funding to support school-based health centers in partnerships with ODH.

5. School Resource Officers: The Governor's Executive Budget supports funding (\$194 million) for new School Resource Officer hires. This funding is commensurate with each school district's state share of their school funding.

POSITION:

1. The Ohio 8 supports funding to help support costs related to hiring School Resources Officers.

[The Ohio 8 Coalition](#) is a strategic alliance composed of the superintendents and teacher union presidents from Ohio's eight urban school districts – Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo, and Youngstown. The Ohio 8 Coalition's mission is to work with policy makers to improve academic performance, increase graduation rates and close the achievement gap for urban children throughout Ohio. The Coalition carries out its mission by working closely with legislators, educators, parents, labor, and community officials. The Coalition brings a shared administrator-teacher voice to shape education policy.