

Proponent Testimony for HB33, Sections 3318.33, 265.980 and 803.210
Senate Finance Committee
5/31/2023

Superintendent Monte Bainter, Logan-Hocking School District
Coalition of Rural and Appalachian Schools

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chairman Cirino, and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Monte Bainter, I am the Superintendent of Logan-Hocking School District and the President-Elect of CORAS. I am here today to amplify the additional needs of school districts in our region within the state budget.

When I became a superintendent 20 years ago, we educated kids in a very different way than we do now. Back then, our only priorities as school districts were the ABCs and 123s. Today, we understand that to educate our children effectively, we must consider the whole child. While I agree, you cannot learn when your belly is growling or if you are covered in soot from your failing facilities, educating the whole child comes with a lot of territory, such as: before and after school care, preschool through workforce development, College Credit Plus, and everything in between. It means providing healthcare on site through our school based clinic, because 40% of our students do not have a primary care physician. It means mental health care, a need so painfully prevalent amongst our student body, requiring care so specialized that not just any teacher or staff member can provide that to our kids.

In Appalachian Ohio, if there is a community need or initiative it runs through our only community hub – the school district. Our schools are where all internal, external, and state-down programs fall; because there are rarely other organizations in our towns to provide youth focused services. This is all important work, but it is a very expensive operation.

So please know, when school districts come to you asking to be funded at an adequate rate to provide these services, we know it is a massive monetary ask. However, it is a necessary one. Know that these programs are more than dollars and cents. When we cannot provide these services, we lose kids.

I urge you to protect the House's investment in the Fair School Funding formula, including the 2022 inputs. I urge you to protect the proposed investments in Early Childhood Education Grants, mental health services, and school meals. We know these programs are expensive, but we need these funds to provide what is required of us. For our students, what our schools can give to them is a matter of life or death. This is why we ask for funds from the state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.