



OHIO CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NETWORK

A Network of Center for Christian Virtue

SB311 Proponent Testimony
Senate Education Committee
Troy McIntosh, Executive Director
February 17, 2025

Good afternoon Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee.

My name is Troy McIntosh, and I serve as Executive Director of the Ohio Christian Education Network. We represent almost 200 chartered nonpublic schools across the state—schools that educate over 50,000 Ohio school children and partner closely with families in their local communities.

I am here today to express our support for the provision in SB311 that would permit chartered nonpublic schools to bid on the purchase or lease of unused public school facilities when no high-performing community school has expressed interest.

This is a prudent and fair policy change grounded in stewardship, equity, and fiscal responsibility.

First, these facilities belong to the public.

They were built with taxpayer dollars. They represent decades of community investment in education. When a building is no longer needed or is severely underused, districts have an obligation to right-size responsibly and to recoup as much of that public investment as possible. Leaving buildings vacant or partially empty imposes ongoing maintenance costs, security expenses, and deferred capital burdens on taxpayers. Demolishing them destroys assets that are owned by the community.

Unused school buildings are not neutral. They deteriorate. They drain resources. And they signal decline.

Selling or leasing those facilities—particularly to entities that will continue using them for educational purposes—is good stewardship. It honors the community’s original investment by keeping the asset productive.

Second, chartered nonpublic schools serve the children of those same communities.

Our schools are not outsiders. They are state-chartered, state-regulated institutions educating Ohio students—many of whom live within the very districts that own these unused facilities. Their families pay taxes. They are members of the community. They contribute to its vitality.



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Current law allows certain public school entities—such as community schools and STEM schools—to receive priority access to unused facilities. But chartered nonpublic schools are excluded from even participating in the process.

SB 311 does not displace high-performing community schools from their priority position. It simply allows chartered nonpublic schools to enter the bidding process if those schools decline.

Equal access to bid is not preferential treatment—it is fair treatment. If a building is no longer needed by the district, and if the goal is to return it to productive educational use, chartered nonpublic schools should have the same opportunity to compete as other schools serving the community.

Third, expanding the pool of potential bidders benefits districts and taxpayers.

Basic economics tells us that more bidders can produce stronger offers. When districts are limited in who may participate, they reduce competition and potentially reduce the return on the asset. Allowing chartered nonpublic schools to bid increases the likelihood that districts will receive a better financial outcome—whether through a higher purchase price or more favorable lease terms.

At a time when many districts face fiscal pressures and enrollment shifts, maximizing the value of unused assets is simply good governance.

I respectfully urge your support for this provision in SB 311.