



Senate Finance Testimony

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Abbie Sigmon and I am the executive director of the Ohio Association for Gifted Children (OAGC). With nearly 1,000 members, OAGC promotes and supports the development of gifted students in Ohio by advocating on their behalf. Gifted students, by definition in the Ohio Revised code, are those “students who perform or show potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared to others of their age, experience, or environment.”

There are more than 225,000 identified gifted students in Ohio; however, the state of Ohio has a gifted identification mandate but no gifted service mandate. This means that students are identified as having the potential to perform at remarkably high levels of accomplishment, but aren’t always given that opportunity through gifted services. Ohio has fewer than 940 Gifted Intervention Specialists (GISs) and fewer than 1,150 gifted staff - including ESC staff to serve these students. While I will be discussing specific changes to the Operating Budget, it is important to note that these ratios of gifted staff to gifted students are deeply unsatisfactory and directly contribute to the daily burnout, struggles, and exhaustion of gifted staff.

§3317.022 Gifted Professional Development Funds

The 2018 Gifted Cost Study performed by the Ohio Education Research Center under the purview of the then Ohio Department of Education outlined four main gifted cost recommendations: identification, professional development, gifted coordinators, and gifted instructional services. These recommendations from the OERC have shaped gifted funding in this state; however, the gifted cost study inexplicably assumed that professional development for general education educators could be eliminated in four years. With new teachers joining the workforce and newly identified gifted students every year, professional development for general education educators is an ongoing cost and should be funded as such.

Gifted services in Ohio have expanded by over 300% in less than a decade. And, as previously mentioned, staff to gifted student ratios are so vast that these students must be served by general education teachers who have the knowledge and understanding of their unique needs, abilities, and capabilities. According to the Gifted Rule (OAC 3301-51-15), general education teachers who are designated service providers and do not otherwise have licensure or endorsement in gifted education must receive professional development in gifted education covering specific competencies from qualifying providers. The removal of this section of the

ORC is not consistent with Ohio's requirements for general education teachers providing gifted services and would represent another unfunded mandate.

Please adopt the SC1121-1 amendment which is found at the end of my testimony

Finally, gifted students are frequently presumed to thrive independent of academic intervention or support. This assumption is both misleading and detrimental to a gifted child's development. Gifted children must be provided with challenges that align with their exceptional abilities, or they risk social and emotional struggles, boredom, and chronic underachievement. Ignoring the unique needs of this student population does a disservice to their capabilities. I strongly urge this committee to adequately fund services for these students when considering gifted funding in HB96, ensuring they receive the appropriate resources and opportunities to fulfill their potential.

Thank you to the members of this committee for listening to my testimony. I'm happy to answer any questions at this time.

For more information, please contact OAGC Executive Director, Abbie Sigmon, at: (330) 495-5230 or executivedirector@oagc.com.

Am. Sub. H. B. No. 96
As Passed by the House

_____ moved to amend as follows:

In line 57396, after "(iii)" reinsert the balance of the line	1
Reinsert lines 57397 through 57400	2
In line 57401, reinsert everything before " \$21 "	3
In line 57402, reinsert "\$28"	4
In line 57403, reinsert "(iv)"	5
In line 57412, after "(iii)" reinsert the balance of the line	6
Reinsert lines 57413 and 57414	7
In line 57415, reinsert "(iv)"	8
In line 57760, delete " <u>and</u> "	9
In line 57761, reinsert ", and gifted professional"	10
In line 57762, reinsert "development"	11
In the table on line 131022, in row X, delete "\$8,518,736,974	12
\$8,716,947,875" and insert "\$8,519,236,974 \$8,717,447,875"	13
In the table on line 131022, in rows AD and CB, add \$500,000 to each	14
fiscal year	15
In line 132129, delete ", excluding gifted professional"	16

In line 132130, delete "development funds" 17

The motion was _____ agreed to.

SYNOPSIS

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Gifted professional development funds

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R.C. 3317.022; Section 265.235

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Extends the payment of gifted professional development 21
funding for school districts to FY 2026 and FY 2027. 22

Adds gifted professional development funds to the gifted 23
funds categorical payment for which a school district is subject 24
to spending requirements using FY 2026 and FY 2027 temporary 25
foundation funding. 26

Department of Education and Workforce

27

Section 265.10

28

Increases GRF ALI 200550, Foundation Funding - All 29
Students, by \$500,000 in each fiscal year. 30