

Substitute House Bill 64

Testimony Regarding TPP Reimbursements

House Finance and Appropriations Committee

Edward Theroux – Superintendent, Princeton City Schools

April 16, 2015

Good day. My name is Edward Theroux. I am the Interim Superintendent of the Princeton City School District in Hamilton County. Besides being a proud staff member of the Princeton City School District, I am also a proud parent of a current third grade student. Today, we have several parents, administrators, staff, community members, and leaders here with me. We all carry the same voice and opposition to this proposed budget. Our main concern is the TPP reimbursement, the promise to make schools whole, and the knowledge that the Princeton School District is not made whole.

We are here to express Princeton's opposition to the recommendation regarding the substitute version of House Bill 64 to end tangible personal property tax reimbursements (TPP) to school districts and to make you aware of possible unintended consequences of its elimination.

Princeton City School District is a unique district that is composed of the following communities: Evendale, Glendale, Lincoln Heights, Sharonville, Springdale, and Woodlawn. We also encompass Hamilton, Butler and Warren counties and parts of Springfield and Sycamore Townships. Forty three languages are spoken within our schools. There is a 60-65% poverty rate within our schools. We are nearing the 20% mark of students who are English Language Learners.

We have a steep and rich history and Viking pride. When you come to Princeton or talk to a community member, you will hear tales of the strength of our schools and community. Our diversity and challenges are not found in many school districts. Yet, we rise to the occasion and provide a well-rounded education to all students that we call the Princeton Advantage. Our alumni share how well prepared they are to collaborate, work with others, and meet and exceed the challenges found beyond high school. Our community, staff,

administrators, and students take pride in our accomplishments. This proposal will harm the Princeton Advantage, education, and our ability to meet the needs of our students.

Our district has already reduced our spending and has made drastic reductions in order to reduce our budget by 8 million dollars of TPP reimbursement that we no longer receive. We cut our staff, services and programs. These cuts have been significant and we are at a place that additional cuts will negatively impede student success and progression. Additional cuts will put us at a disadvantage to other school districts. Additional cuts will compromise the community quality and value. We will not be able to sustain additional TPP reimbursement reductions and maintain our quality education. Again, promises were made back in 2005 and forward that schools would be made whole in relationship to the TPP. Even with the school funding formula changes and the TPP reimbursement that you have proposed, Princeton stands to lose millions of dollars. This proposed budget does not fix the TPP reimbursement and school funding issue for Princeton.

Our businesses, leadership, schools, and commitment have helped the state of Ohio recover from the recent recession. The local taxes collected and distributed by this legislative body have helped the state of Ohio heal and grow. We continue to work together to provide a better life for all. This proposal threatens our ability to continue our growth, quality of life, and future. Please keep your promise and make us whole.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for your attention today and for your commitment to the State of Ohio and its citizens. Please consider the negative impact of elimination of the TPP reimbursement on communities like Princeton and our ability to bring economic development to our state. Please maintain the current level of TPP reimbursement for Princeton and for all school districts. Please fix the TPP and school funding issue permanently as this has been a problem for many years. Thank you. At this time I would be happy to answer any question you may have.