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June 10, 2015

To: Senator Scott Oelslager, Chair  
Ranking Minority Member, Senator Michael J. Skindell  
Members of the Senate Finance Committee

From: Tim Katz, Executive Director  
Ohio Alliance for Arts Education

**RE: Support for Amendment # SC3902X1 / HB64 (LaRose)**

Senator Oelslager, and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Tim Katz, and I am the executive director of the Ohio Alliance for Arts Education (OAAE). Thank you for the opportunity to make this brief statement concerning Amendment # SC3902X1 / HB64.

My organization and many others have serious concerns with the Revised Operating Standards for Ohio Schools adopted in April of this year by the State Board of Education, particularly with the elimination of the so-called “5 of 8 Rule”. We have repeatedly asked the State Board of Education, and now the Ohio Senate and House, to focus on the educational needs of the students and the type of education system that they need and deserve to prepare them best for 21<sup>st</sup> Century careers and higher education, rather than act solely in service to the political ideals of flexibility and local control. When it comes to the education of Ohio children from ages 5 to 18, we should all be willing to institute some common sense, minimum standards in order to ensure children’s holistic educational needs have the very best chance of being met. We should all be willing to encourage proven educational best practices rather than simply promote political philosophies.

Many of the statewide stakeholders in the education issues represented in ORC amendment # SC3902X1 / HB64 are very disappointed that this relatively benign and revenue-neutral amendment in support of best practice in Ohio schools did not make it into the Senate Substitute Bill, and we ask for your help in seeing to it the amendment is attached to the Omnibus Bill that will be brought to the Senate floor early next week.



This amendment ensures several positives:

- It says that Ohio K-12 students should have access to a complete curriculum, including the fine arts, music, and physical education, and comprehensive services, through school nurses, school social workers, library media specialists, and counselors.
- It says Ohio school districts should employ teachers for these subjects that hold Ohio teaching licenses in the appropriate subject area and grade level.
- It directs the Ohio Department of Education to report in districts' annual report cards specific hiring data for all the positions listed above, increasing transparency and accountability, providing parents and other local stakeholders with more information about their schools.
- It directs the Ohio Department of Education imply to recognize those districts hiring a minimum of 5 of these professional educators out of the 7 categories per 1,000 students, simply encouraging, but not mandating, a minimum ratio similar to the ratio recently removed from Rule 5 of the Operating Standards after more than 30 years of precedence.

This amendment is aligned to ASCD's *Global Recommendations for 2015* which calls for a comprehensive education system that includes student access to a well-rounded education in all subject areas, social emotional learning, health, mental health, and counseling services, and a comprehensive accountability system for schools based on multiple measures of performance, including student achievement in all subjects taught and nonacademic factors that affect the conditions of learning.

We sincerely appreciate the work and support of Senator LaRose and his staff for this measure, and we thank the senator. We strongly feel that the time is now to get this language into ORC as a response - a response called for at the JCARR Panel Meeting on March 16<sup>th</sup> by elected officials on both sides of the isle and in both houses of the General Assembly - to the recent, very controversial weakening of the Operating Standards for Ohio Schools by the State Board of Education.

The issues and subject matter described in the amendment are not new. The language of Senator LaRose's amendment was the result of compromise, with statewide stakeholders agreeing to a pragmatic approach in the hope that certain holistic education ideals and aspirations for Ohio could at least be stated, if not mandated, in law, and that the senate would stand for such ideals and aspirations.

The Ohio Senate has identified reading proficiency and increased graduation rate as among its top priorities for Ohio schools. The curricula and student support services highlighted by this amendment are proven to enhance the likelihood of attaining both of those goals, as well as a host of other proven positive results for K-12 students. It should be easy for the senate to approve this amendment.

Statewide organizations that support this amendment include the Ohio Alliance for Arts Education, the Ohio Art Education Association (OAEA), the Ohio Music Education Association



(OMEA), the Ohio Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance, the Ohio Education Association (OEA), the Ohio Educational Library Media Association, and the Ohio Association of School Nurses.

We urge the senate leadership to include this amendment in the coming Omnibus bill.

Thank you very much.