



Central Office

7946 Beechmont Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45255
513-231-3600
Fax: 513-231-3830
www.foresthills.edu

Scot T. Prebles
Superintendent

Alana Cropper
Treasurer

Mike Broadwater
Assistant Superintendent, Business Operation/HR

Greg Sears
Assistant Superintendent, Teaching and Learning

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House Finance Sub Committee on Primary and Secondary Education:

Chair, Tracy Richardson;

Ranking Minority member, Dan Troy

My name is Scot Prebles, I am the superintendent of Forest Hills Local Schools, a suburb of Cincinnati located in Hamilton County.

I would like to provide testimony today regarding my endorsement of a public education funding proposal, brought before this body, known as the Fair School Funding Plan, HB 1 – most specifically I want to speak to open enrollment, community schools and voucher recommendations within the model.

However, before doing so, I must first acknowledge my deep appreciation for House Speaker Cupp and representative Patterson who have provided unwavering leadership support for the pre-kindergarten through grade 12 students of Ohio.

Additionally, I'd like to thank all of the state's legislators who have studied the content of our committee's work including members present today. I also want to thank all the representatives who signed on as co-sponsors during our three year, now beginning year four journey to this moment. Your interest in advancing possibilities for Ohio's school age children through a proposed funding model dedicated to provide adequate resources so that Ohio students receive a high quality education.

Obviously, the price for all Pre K through grade 12 Ohio children to have equitable access to quality education is of great concern to all Ohioans. That is why we as a committee worked closely during our journey with Ohio's education groups as well as state and national education experts to identify essential, cost based and justifiable proposals. I was honored to be teamed with my colleague Steve McAfee, Logan Elm Treasurer, as co-chair of the open enrollment, community schools and voucher subgroup.

If Steve were here today he would outline the following:

There are just shy of 1.7 million students across the state. 106,214 or 6.3% of those students attend a community school (aka charter school). 39,638 or 2.3% attend a nonpublic school through a voucher program such as an EdChoice Scholarship. And 83,169 or 4.9% attend a traditional public school outside of their district of residence through open enrollment.

In the past, students participating in these school choice programs have still been included in their resident district's student count (ADM) for funding purposes. This generates per pupil funding. Then there are separate calculations that subtract money from the resident district that follows students going to a community school, non-public school, or other public school through open enrollment. This is referred to as a pass-through methodology. The net effect of these ins and outs is not a wash, so it impacts the amount of funding available to educate students who remain in the traditional public school.

The pass-through methodology muddies the waters of school funding and is a great source of frustration for all public schools. The Fair School Funding Plan untangles this mess because the Plan removes students participating in school choice programs from the ADM of their resident district. In other words, we're going to count and fund students where they are educated. Simple as that.

Now, abandoning the pass-through methodology did create an issue with Community Schools, because it left them without a funding formula. However, the edited Fair School Funding Plan being presented now provides an interim formula for Community Schools that applies most of the same calculations to determine base cost funding. And we also called for a study, which is already authorized and funded in the Capital Appropriation Bill, to determine a permanent funding formula for Community Schools that better reflects their unique operations and expectations. Like the slide says, funding of school choice programs becomes its own separate conversation.

The last issue I want to talk about has to do with open enrollment. Our workgroup's charge was to develop a fair, modern and rational funding formula. And we wanted to do so in a way that did not affect participation levels in school choice programs. This is trickiest with open enrollment, because individual school districts choose whether or not they want to accept students from other districts. Districts consider the financial incentive to accept a student and whether it offsets additional costs in making this decision. If our formula significantly changed that incentive, school districts may change their open enrollment policy, affecting overall participation.

We found in running simulations that including open enrollment students in the educating district's count for funding purposes generated a comparable incentive to

what districts currently receive under today's pass-through methodology. The Fair School Funding Plan works as is!

One of the basic tenets of HB 1 is that school aged children should be funded where they are taught. The state's current funding mechanism has proven to be unpredictable, unclear, unable to adequately serve its intended purpose and is out of sync with the needs of today's school age children. And, I respectfully submit, with nearly 100% of Ohio districts subjected to what are known as caps or guarantees, the current funding model is not effective.

Our collective work to develop a base cost to educate all students fairly was difficult to apply to community and charter schools as they do not provide across the board comparable services. However, during the last twelve to fifteen months, we have coalesced around the following transparent funding concepts:

- Adapt HB1's new base cost model for traditional schools and community schools.
- Calculating for each charter and community school the same statewide average per pupil amount for the other three components of the traditional Ohio school formula.
 - Instructional and Student Supports - absent of athletic and co-curricular costs. (15%)
 - Building Leadership and Operations.(20%)
 - District Leadership and Accountability. (5%)
- Calculating a community and charter school total average per pupil average cost allocation of \$6,795; \$400 shy of the model's traditional school proposal.

These suggested allocations are included in the bill's substitute version to ensure that an appropriate amount of resources needed for high quality education exists for all of the state's students. Our community and charter partners deserve similar fairness, rationale and justifiable allocations in their world as we propose for ours.

Regardless of our location or institution, we are all obligated to provide high quality education for Ohio's school age children. Both community and public school professionals wish to eliminate the strained relationship that exists due to the way resources flow to community school students. HB 1's direct funding will add the much needed transparency, fairness and cost based funding we each desire.

Regarding Ohio's open enrollment students, HB 1 funds students transferring through open enrollment at their location, consistent with the concept that students are to be funded at the school where they are taught, with no windfalls and no dramatic losses.

Basically, a pool of dollars/resources would be established with the following financial

parameters:

- A school that loses a student to open enrollment will forfeit the difference between their base cost state share and \$7,195.
- A school that gains a student will receive the difference between their base cost state share and \$7,195.

Once more, the purpose of this open enrollment clause of our proposal is intended to ensure that fairness, clarity and transparency exists.

Based on my testimony and my Fair Funding Committee colleagues, I urge you to accept our proposal to ensure possibilities for Ohio's school age children through a proposed funding model dedicated to provide adequate resources to district's so that all of Ohio's school aged children receive the "high quality education" they deserve.

Thank you for your consideration, the honor of providing my opinions to you today and for your collective work to ensure the needs of Ohio children and citizens are met.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scot Prebles". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Scot Prebles
Superintendent