



March 1, 2021

Chair Richardson, members of the subcommittee, and sponsors- Rep. Callender and Rep. Sweeney, on behalf of School Choice Ohio, I thank you for all of your efforts.

House Bill 1 represents a significant amount of work done by hundreds of Ohio professional school administrators. Like any important piece of legislation, there is a lot to like and some areas that need more work.

You have heard many hours of testimony in favor of HB 1, and I will limit my comments to a few key areas that would benefit from additional focus.

School Choice Ohio focuses on advancing public policy that allows families to access the best education for their children. School Choice Ohio supports a range of educational options including:

- Students' district of residence
- Open enrollment in another public school district
- Home education
- Community schools (sometimes referred to as public charter schools); and
- Private schools with the assistance of Ohio's scholarship programs such as EdChoice.

While withholding comment on HB 1's funding proposal's general thrust, there are several areas where changes would improve its promise.

1. HB 1 proposes to fund open enrolled students by only using the State Share Index of the resident district foundation amount. If so, this provision may significantly underfund open enrollment, jeopardizing the education of over 80,000 students that use this public school choice option. Do we believe that this change doesn't create a disincentive for participating districts? Does this change result in the reduction of key choice opportunities? Could this change result in increased education inequality? An increase in segregation? These are core issues that HB 1 does not fully address.
2. We believe the spirit of equity reflected in HB 1 should also include choice programs. Ensuring that funding levels for districts, community schools and scholarship programs accurately reflect students' needs and the value of each student is a critical component to a fair and equitable system.
3. Funding choice programs, both community schools and private school choice programs, achieve important public policy objectives. We, more than most, appreciate the narrative of the perceived zero-sum game that our current formula appears to create. However, while valuable, direct funding choice programs must be legislated delicately to allow for

growth in the student population. Additionally, a funding formula needs to allow for predictability by limiting political interferences via a potential line-item veto and competition between line items that are intended to support students' education. We believe that this task is feasible but takes careful and deliberate effort.

4. We strongly support the continuation of The Quality Charter Grant Program. This program, included in both the last budget and the more recent executive proposal, provides critical incentives to accelerate the sector's improvement further.

5. The transportation laws that have supported so much achievement must be allowed to continue and be strengthened. All transportation law changes and funding should be vetted to make sure they do not inappropriately create unintended changes. Since the 1960s, Ohio's school transportation laws have been student-focused and mostly agnostic of the educational entity. Ohio's education and transportation investment since that time has reflected that value. Any changes in this regard that do not strengthen parental rights should be reassessed.

There are many other areas of HB 1 that are worth comment. Portions of the bill do a great job; some provisions are problematic and deserve improvement. School Choice Ohio welcomes this conversation that focuses on improving our education system and the important on the role of parental choice.

School Choice Ohio and I welcome any questions.

Eric "Yitz" Frank

President, School Choice Ohio