



Ohio
Prevention
Advocacy
Network

**Ohio Senate Health Committee
Ohio Prevention Advocacy Network
May 6, 2021**

Good morning, Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written-only testimony as an interested party in consideration of House Bill 110 the state's biennial budget. The Ohio Prevention Advocacy Network ("OPAN") is a coalition of prevention advocates striving to establish safe, healthy and stable communities by elevating the voices of Ohio's prevention experts.

As evidenced by our name, we at OPAN are prevention advocates, and as prevention advocates we are commonly asked by those unfamiliar with our work, what is prevention or "what are you preventing?" Prevention is more than avoiding substance use disorders and mental illness. Prevention helps people develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to make healthy choices and promote behaviors that benefit individuals, families, communities, and our entire state. Prevention is also very cost effective. Evidenced-based programs that target skill-building and positive decision-making among school-age youth have a return on investment of up to \$17.25 for every dollar spent.

We applaud the House of Representatives for their effort to propose an updated school funding formula as part of HB 110. However, we are concerned by the approach of combining the Student Wellness and Success Funds with the Economically Disadvantage funds into the Disadvantaged Pupil Impact Aid (DPIA) fund for several reasons.

1. **Overall, funding is reduced.** The proposed DPIA fund is appropriated at \$620 million, whereas the SWSF and Economic Disadvantage Pupil fund were each funded at \$400 million (\$800 combined). Net loss= \$180 million.
2. The proposed DPIA fund relies on the Governor's proposed appropriation for SWSF funds but distributes funds solely on the number of low-income students identified in each school and the number of students receiving free and reduced lunch. Whereas the SWSF provides a base funding allocation to each school plus an additional per student payment tiered by quartile based on a federal poverty index. Most schools will LOSE funding in this area.
3. While unintended, this approach stigmatizes social-emotional development, mental health, and prevention as limited to low-income students and families. This changes the conversation from every student to only disadvantaged students.
4. Gains made through universal prevention, expanded access to mental health consultation and services, and family engagement will now compete with resources to support reduced class sizes, reading intervention, public pre-school for four-year-old children, and security and (physical plant)

safety. This dilutes and supplants SWSF activities likely resulting in lost access to prevention and mental health services in schools.

5. The Base Cost Funding Formula includes Social/Emotional/Security/Life Support as one of several factors captured within the Instructional and Student Supports category (15% of Base Cost) However, this is simply a formula used to develop the base cost. The unrestricted nature of the base funding does not guarantee use to support activities or initiatives as defined under SWSF.
6. Prevention services and the coalitions that provide them are no longer listed as a potential use or partner for the DPIA/Student Wellness and Success funds. This oversight weakens this funding measure tremendously and would lead to decreased social-emotional support for every student.

To fix these issues, we strongly recommend restoring R.C 3317.26 Student Wellness and Success authorization language and funding to the Governor's as introduced version.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written-only testimony as an interested party in consideration of Sub HB 110. If you have any questions or wish to discuss the issue further, feel free to reach out to the OPAN co-chairs listed below.

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Ohio Athletic Trainers Association
Ohio Teen Institute
Prevention Action Alliance
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Problem Gambling Network of Ohio
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