



Testimony for the Ohio Senate
Primary and Secondary Education Committee
Thomas L. Hosler, Superintendent Perrysburg Schools
& Ryan Pendleton, CFO/Treasurer Akron Public Schools
Testimony on HB 110
April 27, 2021

Chairman Brenner, Vice-Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Primary/Secondary Education Committee, good morning. My name is Tom Hosler and I am the Superintendent of Perrysburg Schools, located in Northwest Ohio. I have been honored to serve as co-chairperson of the Base Cost Subcommittee of the Cupp-Patterson School Funding Workgroup along with Akron Public Schools CFO Ryan Pendleton. Today, we are offering testimony in support of House Bill 110.

On behalf of the Fair School Funding work group, I want to thank you for the opportunity to be here today and tomorrow to share information about the Fair School Funding Plan. The work done in creating the Ohio Fair School Funding Plan, the passage of H.B. 305, introduction and hearings of S.B. 376, and now the arrival of the Fair School Funding (FSFP) again in the Senate (H.B. 110) has been reported in virtually every county in Ohio. We have been pleased with the support and enthusiasm that our efforts have generated.

However, as a team, we recognize this process begins anew today and we are excited to share the product of our work and the provisions of the FSFP and to answer, to the best of our ability, all of your questions.

Background of the Fair School Funding Plan

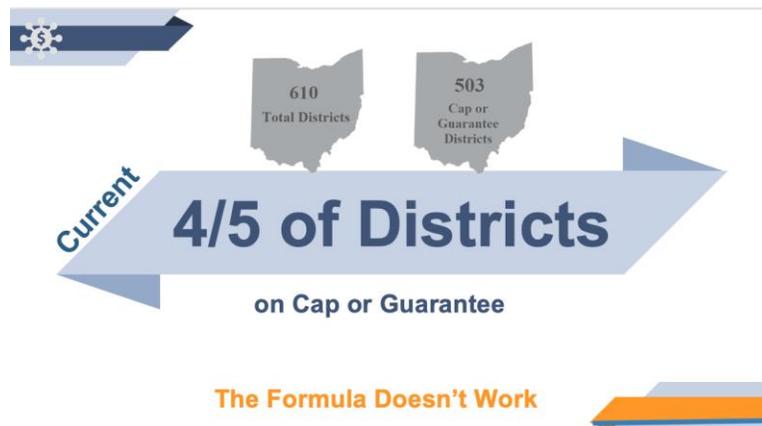
Today marks nearly three and half years since the very first meeting of the Cupp-Patterson Work Group, which was held in the Riffe Center on November 15, 2017. Today, we are excited to share with you the latest incarnation of the original product of the Cupp-Patterson Work Group. Our charge, on that cold November day in 2017, was said best by Representatives Cupp and Patterson during their press conference:

“As Ohio legislators, we are committed and determined to find an education funding system for our state’s pre-kindergarten through grade 12; one that is fair, rational and justifiable and in contrast to

our current system that is often unfair and nearly always incomprehensible. For decades, Ohio leaders have tried but have come up short of finding an equitable way to fund the most fundamental service provided by state government.”

You see, for decades, Ohio leaders have tried and failed to find an equitable way to fund the most fundamental service provided by state government. To that end, then Representatives Cupp and Patterson assembled practitioners from across the state to develop a plan that funds the students where they need it most. The Fair School Funding Plan Work Group through their testimony beginning with base costs and will describe how each vital area supports students in the ways they need it most. Once again, this is a comprehensive plan that literally has considered the moment the students are picked up on the bus at the crack of dawn until they log off on their school computer at 11:59 p.m. Everything educationally that happens between those two times has been considered.

To resolve complex and high stakes policy issues, like school funding, during the biennial budget process has led to a patchwork quilt of funding with various special interest groups and virtually all 610 school districts advocating for their individual districts. As a result, today’s school funding model is unrecognizable, indefensible and no longer justifiable.



As you can see on the slide above from the 2017-2019 biennium budget when we began the work group, there were 610 public school districts in Ohio. Of those, 503 were funded outside the formula. In other words, 82% of all of Ohio’s school districts were either “capped,” meaning they do not receive the

full funding the formula requires, or “guaranteed,” which means these districts received more funding than what the formula requires. In the most recent biennium budget, 2019-2021, there are now 0 districts or 0% on the formula as not a single one is receiving what the formula calls for.

The failures of today’s Ohio funding formula cut across school district lines; it fails children in urban, suburban, small, large and rural districts across the state. Throughout today and tomorrow you will hear example after example of how the current formula fails Ohio’s children and why the Fair School Funding Plan is the comprehensive formula Ohio deserves.

Today, the “base” funding for a student in Ohio is \$6,020. There is no rational way to explain how we as a state arrived at this number. In addition to this, the current funding formula in Ohio has become a tool that has divided the educational community for too long. Capped vs. guarantee, rural vs. urban, wealthy vs. poor, charter vs. traditional vs. private. The process Representatives Cupp and Patterson initiated involved eight superintendents and eight treasurers from across the state, representing large urbans, suburbans, rural, rural poor, small city, career tech centers, poor and wealthy districts. Like Representatives Cupp and Patterson, these educators worked across school district lines and focused on what matters most – Ohio’s students. In education, we must stop with the “them and us” mentality that has both divided and paralyzed anyone who has tried to address the state funding formula problem. We owe it to the next generations of Ohio students to work together.

At the end of the process we ask these questions: What about the students? What do school kids really need? Are Ohio’s young people prepared for success in a rapidly changing world?

Three and a half years ago, a diverse cross-section of practitioners from around the state assembled by Representatives Cupp and Patterson began their work. We enlisted the people who best know the educational needs of Ohio’s children – educators and school finance officials – to collaborate in a comprehensive analysis of Ohio’s funding of our public education system and to provide us with a set of practical, needs based recommendations that would be fair to all of Ohio’s kids, school districts and taxpayers. Today, we are witnessing the culmination of these collective efforts.

We arranged these Ohio school educators and financial officers into eight Subgroups, each with its own assigned subject areas and co-chaired by two actively engaged educators – one a superintendent, the other a treasurer or chief financial officer. Then, we asked them to come up with essential, objective, cost based, and justifiable proposals in their assigned subject areas.

Fair School Funding Plan, as reflected in House Bill 110, provides the elusive answer to the school funding challenge by focusing on the student in the classroom. In fact, 75% of the formula provides funds directly and indirectly to the classroom. Since its original introduction to this present bill, we continued to listen to feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders and remained committed to working with practitioners. This current bill has gone the furthest and creates Ohio's own unique funding formula that is based on a simple premise: what each student needs to be successful.

What does every student need to succeed?
What does every district need to operate?

Throughout our testimony today and tomorrow you will hear about the necessary components to answer these questions. They include (i) determining “base cost,” (ii) deciphering the state and local shared responsibility, and (iii) calculating the additional categoricals.

This diverse workgroup was driven by a core set of values that guided us on all that we did. At no time, did anyone on the committee begin to lobby for changes that would benefit one group over another. These values produce clear goals that can be seen on the slide below:

Making School Funding Fair.... and Getting it Right

A New, Fair Funding Formula...

- Rational, Understandable & Transparent
- Based on Actual Costs of Ohio Education
- Eliminate "Caps" on Needed Increases
- Respect Local Control

...to Address Critical Needs

- Provide Basic Instructional Resources
- Add Funds for Poverty and Mental Health
- Help Special Needs, Gifted, English Learners
- Improve Security and School Bus Safety
- Invest in Career Tech Centers, STEM, Educational Service Center

Base Cost Detail

The base cost amount includes the necessary components and adequate resources to prepare Ohio’s typical child for success. The base cost amount allocates sufficient resources to provide a typical child – one with no disabilities, or special gifts, who does not live in poverty and is not an English learner – with the essential high quality educational opportunities necessary for success.

The result is a transparent, realistic funding model that addresses the whole child and his/her social and emotional needs, as well as academic needs. Moreover, it can be understood by the general public, as well as by professional practitioners. The new funding model is a method of appropriately calculating the amount of a district’s base cost, but school districts retain local control over the spending and allocation of funds to meet the particular needs of the district’s students.

While each district’s base cost amount will be different based on student class size, the average across the state is approximately \$7,200 per pupil, which is spent in the following areas.

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District Funding Model - Base Cost Example					
Direct Classroom Instruction 60% of Base Cost	Base Aid Teacher Funding				
		Grade Level	Pupil Teacher Ratio Per FTE	Headcount Enrollment	Funded Teachers
		Kindergarten	20	57	2.9
		1st Grade	23	64	2.8
		2nd Grade	23	51	2.2
		3rd Grade	23	52	2.3
		4th Grade	25	60	2.4
		5th Grade	25	79	3.2
		6th Grade	25	60	2.4
		7th Grade	25	77	3.1
		8th Grade	25	58	2.3
		9th Grade	27	62	2.3
		10th Grade	27	66	2.4
		11th Grade	27	42	1.6
		12th Grade	27	40	1.5
	Base Aid Teacher Funding			768	31.2
	Other Direct Instruction		Min/Max		
	Specials Teachers (Art, Music, P/E)	1 per 150 students	6 Min	6.0	
	Substitute Teachers	5 Days per teacher per year			
	Professional Development	4 PD days per year			
	Other Direct Instruction				
	Total Direct Instruction				
Instructional & Student Supports 15% of Base Cost	Co-curriculars - Academic		Amount per pupil		
	Co-curriculars - Athletic (Inc. Athletic Director)		Amount per pupil		
	High School Guidance Support		1 Min	1.0	
	Safety & Security - Non-Personnel		Amount per pupil		
	Supplies & Academic Content		Amount per pupil		
	Library/Media Operations/Support		1 per 1,000 students	0.8	
	Social/Emotional/Security/Life Support		1 per 250 students	5 Min	
	Instructional Technology		Amount per pupil		
	Total Student Support Instruction				
	Total Instructional Costs				
Building Leadership & Operations 20% of Base Cost	Building Leadership		1 per 450 students	1.7	
	Building Operations and Support		Amount per pupil		
	Building Leadership Support		1 per 400 students	3 Max	
	Total Building Leadership & Operations				
	Total Building Leadership & Operations Costs				
District Leadership & Accountability 5% of Base Cost	Superintendent		1 Min	1	
	Treasurer		1 Min	1	
	District Leadership		1 per 750 students	2 Min	
	Fiscal Support		1 per 850 students	2 Min	
	EMIS Support		1 per 5,000 students	1 Min	
	ITC Support, Technology Infrastructure Maintenance		Amount per pupil		
	District Leadership Support		1 per 3 administrators	1 Min	
	Total District Leadership & Accountability Data				
Total District Leadership & Accountability Costs					

In Ohio, there are 610 unique school districts, ranging from serving as few as five students to more than 50,000. Finding a perfect funding formula to meet each of those school districts' unique needs is a challenging feat. The Fair School Funding Plan provides a framework to address each Ohio school districts' needs better than anything we have seen or had before.

In closing, we ask our legislators to consider the Fair School Funding Plan in its entirety, as an essential roadmap to guide school funding decisions. Together, we strive to ensure that Ohio's children will have the quality educational opportunities they need to succeed in a rapidly changing world. And together, we can adopt a comprehensive, fair school funding plan that meets the needs of Ohio's children, future workforce, and economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. We are happy to answer any questions.