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Members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee:

Andrew O. Brenner, Chair

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 the provisions of the revised Fair School Funding model included in Substitute House Bill 110, the state's two-year budget – most specifically I want to speak to open enrollment, community schools and voucher provisions within the model.

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

Additionally, I'd like to thank the increasing number of state legislators who have studied the content of our committee's work, and certainly members of the House who recently and overwhelmingly endorsed the Fair Funding Plan. I'd also like to thank each of you for this opportunity to provide testimony regarding a more equitable, transparent and effective way to financially support public education in Ohio.

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 have worked closely 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.

There are just shy of 1.7 million K-12 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 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 state's current pass-through methodology muddies the waters of school funding and is a great source of frustration for all public schools. If implemented, the Fair School Funding Plan will eliminate the current and cumbersome pass-through dilemma because the plan will remove 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.

Abandoning the pass-through methodology for Community Schools did create an issue because it left them without a funding formula. It was determined that such a formula should mirror, as much as possible, the new Base Cost formula for traditional schools which consists of 4 major components: Direct Classroom Instruction; Instructional and Students Supports; Building Leadership and Operations and District Leadership and Accountability.

A Direct Classroom Instruction per pupil amount was calculated for each community and STEM school using that school's own enrollment data. However, the business plans for Community Schools vary so widely, even though the functions covered in the other three components are similar to those of traditional schools, that it was determined to use the statewide average of traditional schools for the other three components to complete

the full per pupil base cost for each school. This resulted in a very similar base cost for community schools and STEM schools compared to that of the average base cost for Traditional schools, just under \$7200 per pupil.

This revised base cost allocation provision is included in the HB110 to ensure that an appropriate amount of resources needed to provide high quality education exists for all of the state's students. Our community and charter partners deserve the same fairness, rationale and justifiable allocations in their world as we propose in ours.

Finally, 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 complicated with open enrollment, because individual school districts choose whether or not to accept students from other districts; they 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.

Substitute HB 110 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.

We found after running simulations that included 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!

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 110's direct funding will add the much needed transparency, fairness and cost based funding we each desire.

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

At this time Chairman Brenner should you or any members of your committee have questions, I am happy to respond.