



HB 110 Interested Party Testimony
Eldrich Carr, Marburn Academy
Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee
Chairman Andy Brenner
May 4, 2021

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chairman Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today as an interested party on HB 110 and on the importance of the Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship (JPSNS) and Autism Scholarship. My name is Eldrich Carr, and I am the Head of School of Marburn Academy in Columbus, Ohio. However, today I am here representing three schools: Lawrence School serving students and families in Northeast Ohio; Springer School and Center serving students and families in the greater Cincinnati area; and, Marburn Academy serving students and families right here in the greater Columbus area. Each of our schools operate as a nonprofit, tuition-based private independent day school for students with learning disabilities such as dyslexia, ADHD, and executive function issues. Additionally, some of our students may have high-functioning autism. Prior to enrolling in our schools, these families and students have tried a variety of schools and programs with little success. What makes our schools different from other Independent Private Schools is that families come to us out of **necessity** and not by **choice**. Collectively our schools represents a large cross-section of the State of Ohio as we serve families from 29 counties, 158 cities and townships, and 142 school districts.

As the General Assembly considers HB 110 and possible significant changes to the school funding formula, we wish to highlight how these changes may impact the JPSNS and Autism Scholarship which are vital for families of children with special needs in Ohio. These scholarships give students the opportunities to access the specialized resources and learning environment they need to achieve more than they could ever imagine. In both the As Introduced and As Passed by the House versions of HB 110, we appreciate that the JPSNS and Autism Scholarship values remain at current levels although the method in which the scholarship formula functions and is funded changes between the As Introduced and House versions due to the direct state payment model of the Cupp-Patterson plan.

Ultimately, regardless of what the future school funding formula may look like moving forward, the priority for our families is ensuring that the General Assembly maintains at minimum the same levels of funding, scholarship amounts, and accessibility for the JPSNS and Autism Scholarships. However, if feasible we also support increases to these scholarship amounts as it has been several years without any increases. This would provide even more support for families of children with special needs and autism.

Chairman Brenner and members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify on behalf of our students, families and institutions. As we look to the future, it is our hope that the JPSNS and Autism Scholarships are properly funded and secured so that families of children with special needs will have access to the services they need and deserve. I would be happy to answer any questions you have at this time.