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Senate Finance Committee
Proponent Testimony for Senate Bill 376

- Technology Sub Committee

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chairman Burke, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on Senate Bill 376.

Ohio is rated in the top three in the country for bandwidth availability in our schools thanks to the state's decades-long initiative to provide networking capability for education. Data shows that 96 percent of Ohio schools have internet connectivity in their academic buildings. The state can and should connect the relatively small percentage of schools that are not connected. Currently, Ohio does not have a dedicated formula to fund technology in our Pre K – 12 schools.

CHALLENGE

For Ohio students to succeed, districts should have the resources either to hard-wire or offer wireless access in classrooms, and each student should be provided an electronic device such as a Chrome book, iPad, or laptop as determined by the individual school district. This will ensure that all of Ohio's students have access to modern technology to give them a competitive edge for their future and to close technology skills gaps in our future workforce.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of the Technology Subgroup, as outlined in the following chart, have already been incorporated in the new Base Cost proposal.

Base Cost would fund:
\$68.50 per student, annually

\$68.50 was arrived at with the following formula:

- \$37.50 – Individual digital devices for grades 1 -12
 - based upon Chrome book, or equivalent, with 4-year replacement cycle
- \$3.50 – Access Points: Maintenance and replacement
- \$2.50 – Network Switches: Maintenance and replacement
- \$25.00 - Information Technology Centers (ITC) or Third Party Vendor: Essential Functions
 - Fiscal, Student Information, EMIS, Info Ohio, Internet

In light of COVID-19, state funded and locally determined technology needs have never been

greater. This is why we are in support of SB 376. The reliance on remote instruction created hardships for economically disadvantaged and special education communities, but also proved that the proper use of technology can offer new opportunities in the instruction of Ohio's youth. SB 376 provides funding to connect bandwidth to school districts, distribute that bandwidth to classroom and devices, and provides devices for all of our children.

SB 376 constitutes a thorough analysis of school resource requirements and addresses that which our kids need. It also makes it possible to easily modify the bill's requirements based on new tech or newly identifiable needs. After years without a rational, transparent, and reliant school funding system, Ohio educators are asking you to adopt this comprehensive plan to give the general assembly guidance and a detailed template to provide direction as to how new education monies should be spent.