

Ohio House Finance Committee

HB 33

Interested Party Testimony

March 29, 2023

Written-Only Testimony

Chairman Edwards, Ranking Member Sweeney, Members of the House Finance Committee. My name is Richard Smith, school board member with Marysville EVSD. The Biennium Budget Bill, HB 33, will have far-reaching implications for the future of public education in Ohio. Thank you for taking this responsibility seriously. Thank you for the opportunity to address HB 33, the Biennium Budget. I am submitting this testimony as an interested party.

Funding - Our school district, Marysville EVSD, supports the Fair School Funding Plan because it provides a fair, predictable and reliable means for us to plan our spending as we meet the needs of our students and community. We agree with Governor DeWine that the FSP should continue to be phased during this biennium budget. I know that Ohio is in a healthy financial position, ending the previous year, FY 22, \$2.7 billion above estimates. Current data shows that the above estimates continue in FY 23. Further, another \$3.5 billion is held in Ohio's rainy day fund. Our district has responded to Legislative calls to prepare Ohio's students for success. As an educational leader in Personalized Learning, Career Tech Education, and Future Ready Student programs, reliable and predictable funding critical for us to meet our goals. This is the time to invest in Ohio's public school students by fully funding the Fair School Funding plan and updating the formula inputs with FY 22 data in this upcoming biennium. I urge you to amend HB 33 to use FY 22 data for inputs to the formula, and the formula be fully phased in during this budget.

Early Literacy - Governor DeWine's proposed investments in literacy and the comprehensive approach to reading by shifting focus to literacy coaches fits the model we adopted several years ago. Marysville Schools implemented literacy instruction based on the science of reading which has resulted in outstanding student achievement. I ask that the budget be amended to allow our district, as well as other districts who were early adopters of the science of reading, to be eligible for reimbursement for funds we previously spent for this purpose. Requiring institutions of higher education to instruct future teachers in the science of reading would facilitate the implementation of this proposal.

Voucher Expansion - Expansion of vouchers within HB 33 has four areas worthy of additional consideration. Expansion: (1) undermines a fundamental value of public education in the development of a civil/democratic society. (2) promotes inequality of per-pupil funding between private and public recipients. {Private funding levels of \$5,500 and \$7,500 while our district receives \$4,000 per student.}. (3) misaligns priorities by putting voucher funding ahead of the constitutional mandate to fully fund public schools, and (4) does not require the same level of accountability for voucher recipients as public schools.

School Resource Officers – In response to school gun violence, Marysville EVSD, in collaboration with Marysville Police Department and the Union County Sherriff, has one SRO in each of our 9 buildings. The cost takes money away from academic instruction. I appreciate the inclusion of funds to support our SRO program but ODE's intent to apply the state share calculation to this amount for public school applicants

is unfair. Such an action would provide private and charter schools with the full amount from the state, while many public schools would receive partial funding. I ask for equal funding for all school buildings.

Transportation - Funding for the school bus purchase program provided under the previous budget is not continued in this proposed budget. I urge you to restore funding for the school bus purchase program in the biennium budget with the same guidelines established by the Ohio Department of Education. This funding provides grants of at least \$45,000 per bus for districts to remove the oldest model year and highest mileage school buses used for regular route service in Ohio.

Career Technical Education – Marysville ESVD is an educational leader in career education, academic pathways and personalized education. Each child at Marysville Schools is challenged, prepared, and empowered through innovation, collaboration, and inspiration. Innovation to ignite their curiosity, collaboration to strengthen their capacity, inspiration to empower their confidence and fortitude toward the future. In our district, future ready is defined by the path that a student chooses to follow after high school graduation. MEVSD believes students have a multitude of options and opportunities. We recognize the school experience is fundamental to the exploration of career paths and the development of robust employability skills which are widely applicable. As such, MEVSD aspires for 100% of graduates to be prepared for their future by demonstrating successful placement in one of our academic/career pathways one year following graduation. I appreciate the Legislative support for career education and hope the House will support or increase the Governor’s funding proposal in this area.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Smith  
Marysville EVSD Board Member