

# TALLMADGE CITY SCHOOLS

Senate Finance Committee

HB 33 Testimony

Tallmadge City Schools, Summit County

Jeffery W Hostetler, Treasurer/CFO

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Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on House Bill (HB) 33.

My name is Jeff Hostetler, and I serve as the Treasurer/CFO for Tallmadge City Schools in Summit County. Tallmadge City Schools is a suburban district immediately east of Akron. We are 16 miles square and educate roughly 2550 beautiful students.

Please allow me to begin by telling you a bit about my background. I first began my career as a school district treasurer back in April of 1983, so I have been around longer than I thought I would when I started. What this 40 years of experience has afforded me is a front row seat as to how this great state of Ohio has determined to fund, or not fund, schools over the years. I have witnessed the “charge off” grow from 20 to 23 mills back in the day when the state was short of funding. This only exacerbated the phenomenon known as “phantom revenue” because of HB 920, which is an issue for another day. I have lived thru the multiple DeRolph cases as they made their way thru the courts and then back to the legislators. All thru the years funding for schools was determined primarily based on how it fit in the budget with the rest of the state’s needs, and what was left for public education. With the question of “how much does it really cost to adequately fund the education of a student” going unanswered.

The Fair School Funding Plan provides an objective, rational answer to that question. It has created a formula that is a sound basis for determining a cost per child for each district. The state has chosen to phase in this new formula over a period of 6 years. My hope would be that it would be fully funded immediately so the school districts can receive what the formula has determined it needs and deserves.

The other issues that is of utmost significance is the use of current data to determine the cost per student. Currently, the formula is using FY18 cost data, which in no way reflects what the actual cost is to educate a student in our current day. The Fair School Funding Plan was designed to meet the requirements of the Ohio Constitution to provide an adequate education to all of the students in this great state. By using outdated cost figures, the formula cannot work the way it was designed and adopted. School funding will most certainly be underfunded as it has been for all of my 40 year tenure as a school treasurer. Districts all across the state will have to rely on the local communities to pass additional levies that would otherwise be unnecessary if schools were funded adequately.

I urge you as Senators to concur with what the House has proposed and use current data in the formula so the the formula works for everyone. There is too much at stake in the lives and futures of our children, and ultimately our state, to not fund public education at the level which was the intent of the new school funding formula. The issue of school funding has for too long been a negative reflection on legislators of the past. You now have the opportunity to remedy what has been a need that is long overdue.

Chair Dolan and members of the committee, thank you for time and attention, and for your service to the people of the state of Ohio.