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**Public Testimony of Timothy Ryan Jenkins, Treasurer/CFO
Olentangy Local School District, Delaware County, OH
HB 33, FY24-25 State Biennium Budget
Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education**

Chair Richardson, Ranking Member Isaacsohn and Members of the Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today as a proponent of the Fair School Funding Provisions of HB33, the biennium budget bill that will establish appropriations for fiscal years 2024 and 2025.

My name is Ryan Jenkins, and I am the Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer for the Olentangy Local School District. In my twenty-six years in education, I have also been a high school math teacher, and a high school and middle school building principal.

Olentangy Schools, situated in the southern half of Delaware County, is the 4th largest school district in the state of Ohio by number of students—we educate over 23,000 students each day in one of the most successful school districts in the state of Ohio. In fact, we are one of only 12 schools across the state of Ohio to achieve a perfect 5 Stars in all areas of the 2021-22 state report card.

The success of our students is due in large part to the strong support we get from our local constituents. Our residents expect our schools to facilitate maximum learning for every student, every day.

In supporting that mission, our residents have faithfully passed 6 operational levies, 10 bond issues and 2 permanent improvement levies since March of 1999. These ballot issues were critical for our District, and for our community, as we have tried to continue our mission of facilitating maximum learning in perhaps the fastest growing district in Ohio.

While the support of our local community has been steadfast, we also know that our property valuation and growth tend to decrease our state share of the school funding formula. As a District, we completely understand and know that the funding formula calls upon local communities to do their share—we believe that our community has been more than responsive in doing its share.

I am testifying today to ask the Ohio Legislature to approve the school funding formula that is currently in HB 33. As many of you know, this formula was developed as part of a process that sought the bipartisan input of key stakeholders across the state—legislators, educators, superintendents, treasurers, and school funding experts spent over three years developing the key provisions through a collaborative and transparent process using the best research available. The key provisions of the plan were incorporated into HB110, the biennium budget bill passed by the 134th General Assembly.

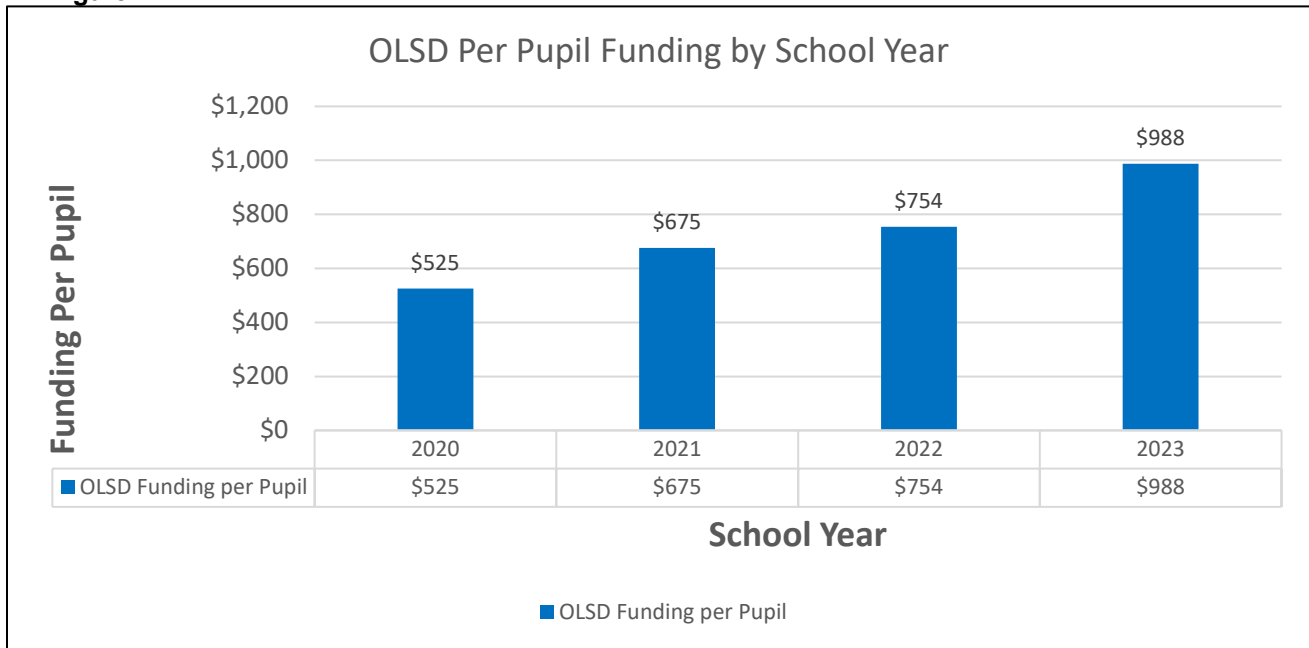
The Fair School Funding Plan provided a much-needed boost for Olentangy Schools. As a rapidly growing district, we were able to see increases in our per pupil funding, much of which was based on our growing enrollment and the phase-in of the formula. The formula allowed for growth in revenue, beyond the base year of FY2021, of 14% in FY22, and in FY23, that increased to about 33%. But while we are pleased that our per pupil state funding has increased, we still do not get as much per pupil from the state of Ohio as pupils who attend private schools (private school funding is currently \$1,362 per private school student comprised of \$927 in auxiliary services funding and \$435 in administrative cost reimbursements). The good news is that the formula implements a continued phase-in over the subsequent 4 years until full funding is achieved, which Olentangy fully supports.

Figure 1 shows how our per pupil funding has grown since the 2020-21 school year—note that this formula funding *does not* include preschool or special education transportation:



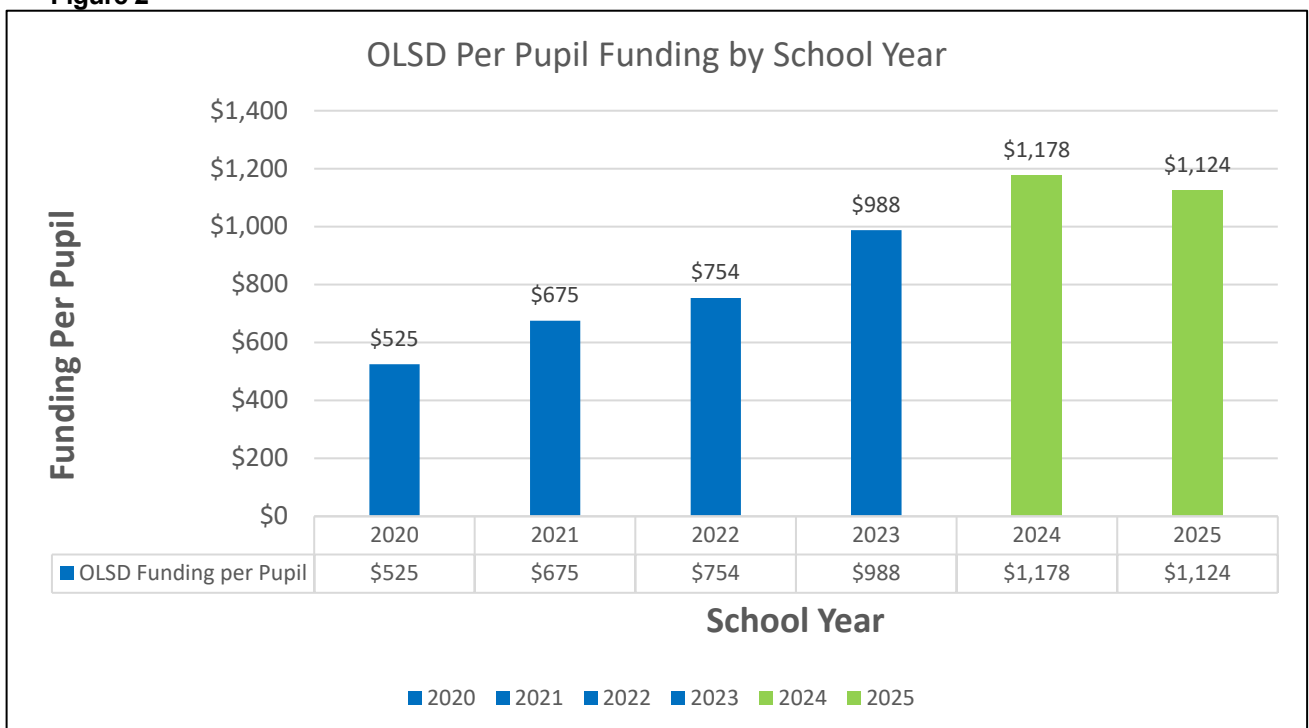


Figure 1



While this growth has been very important for the District, we support the continued phase-in of the funding formula during the FY24-25 biennium. The phase-in percentage allows for the District to recognize the growth we are seeing in student population and continues the very positive trend of increasing per pupil funding in line with the aims of the Fair School Funding task force. Figure 2 incorporates the projected funding phase-ins for FY24 and FY25 (50% and 66.67%, respectively, and *net of* preschool funding and special education transportation; note the assumption that Olentangy funded enrollment will grow by 1% per fiscal year):

Figure 2





As illustrated, the provisions of the bill will work favorably for our District, and this is much welcomed support from the State of Ohio for a District that has historically been very supportive of its schools.

In fact, the District supports the following provisions of the Fair School Funding Plan as being supportive of both Olentangy and Ohio schools in general, as implemented by HB33:

- Requires the use of FY 2022 statewide average base cost per pupil in FY 2024 and FY 2025.
- Requires the use of FY 2022 statewide average career-technical base cost per pupil in FY 2024 and FY 2025.
- Increases the general phase-in and disadvantaged pupil impact aid phase-in percentages from 33.33% in FY 2023 to 50% in FY 2024 and 66.67% in FY 2025.
- Increases the minimum transportation state share percentage from 33.33% in FY 2023 to 37.5% in FY 2024 and 41.67% in FY 2025.
- Increases the career awareness and exploration per pupil amount from \$5 in FY 2023 to \$7.50 in FY 2024 and \$10 in FY 2025.
- Increases the gifted professional development per pupil amount from \$14 in FY 2023 to \$21 in FY 2024 and \$28 in FY 2025

Additionally, the District is very supportive of appropriation line item GRF200489 for school resource officers.

In closing, we would like to offer one item that we feel should be amended. As currently written, HB33, Section 101.01, amends Ohio Revised Code Section 3317.011 in various places, but *does not* amend the provision of school funding that uses data from FY18 to calculate a District's aggregate base costs for, among other things:

- Average salaries for school personnel (ORC 3317.011 (A)(1-10))
- Teacher retirement benefits (ORC 3317.011(A)(10)(b))

As can be seen in Figure 2, the District's funding per pupil will drop a bit in FY25. To be sure, that is due in large part to the fact that 2023 is a reappraisal year for Delaware County, which will increase the local capacity for the District beginning in FY25. Moreover, local capacity will be impacted by the increased incomes for District residents.

But it is also being impacted by using 'cost sets' for district aggregate base costs that will be *nearly 5 fiscal years in arrears*. This is exacerbated by how significant inflation has been since the COVID-19 pandemic. To be clear, the wage increases at Olentangy since the 2017-18 school year, which are not overly excessive, have averaged 2.50% to 3.00% annually. As an example, compounding 3% increases since 2018 would lead to an overall change of 12.60% in a 4-year period.

We therefore propose an amendment to use data from FY22 to calculate a District's aggregate base costs. This would be consistent with other sections of law that will use the fiscal year 2022 statewide average base cost (namely ORC 3317.018).

Thank you for your time, and I welcome any questions or feedback.

Respectfully, Timothy R. Jenkins, Treasurer/CFO, Olentangy Schools