



**Senate Finance Committee
Amended Substitute HB 166 Interested Party Testimony
Ohio Association of School Business Officials
May 29, 2019**

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Burke, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Finance Committee. My name is Barbara Shaner, Advocacy Specialist for the Ohio Association of School Business Officials (OASBO). Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today in support of the Cupp/Patterson School Funding Work Group's Fair School Funding Plan; recommendations for changes to Amended Substitute House Bill (Am. Sub. HB) 166, the biennial budget bill.

On behalf of the OASBO Board of Directors, I am here to offer support for of the Ohio Fair School Funding Plan, and ask for its inclusion into Am. Sub. HB 166. Recognizing the current funding formula fails to apply to approximately 85% of school districts, a team of practitioners — including superintendents and treasurers from across the state of Ohio — worked with State Representatives Bob Cupp and John Patterson to finally solve Ohio's school funding problem. This Working Group consisted of practitioners from urban, suburban and rural school districts, representing the diverse needs and unique challenges that face our 600+ school districts. This was a bi-partisan effort to undertake the difficult task of analyzing, researching options, and ultimately recommending a new funding formula for Ohio schools.

OASBO would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Representatives Cupp and Patterson for their leadership. As an association, we are pleased that our members were tapped to bring their expertise in assisting with this important work. You have already heard testimony from some of the eight treasurers/CFOs who participated on the Work Group to develop the Fair School Funding Plan. We are proud of their dedication and hard work over the past year and a half.

Ohio's schools are tasked with educating and growing each and every child that comes through the door. With that in mind, the Work Group got to work answering the question of how much it costs to provide a quality education to a child. The new fair funding formula answers that question.

The Work Group developed a methodology for determining the basic education costs for a student in an Ohio school district. The recommended methodology takes into account the circumstances in each district, creating per pupil dollar amounts that represent the revenue needed for districts to provide quality educational programming for their students. Ohio has not utilized a cost methodology for the past eight years, and the Work Group's recommendations are welcomed by the education community.

Another major provision included in the funding recommendations is the direct state funding for community schools. This recommendation is of significant importance because it has been a goal of our organization's members to address direct funding of community schools for many years. There has been debate about funding for community schools since their inception, and the deduction from school districts to fund them has caused conflict between the two. We strongly support the transition to a state-funded system for community schools.

The Work Group's recommendations include the need for further study in some areas such as funding for Special Education students, Economically Disadvantaged students and for English Learners. The current version of Am.Sub. HB 166 includes provisions for the recommended studies. Ohio must continue, as the Work Group

suggested, with efforts to find the best funding methods to fund the additional costs associated with educating children with these identified needs.

Since the release of the first simulations for the Fair School Funding Plan, the Work Group has listened to feedback and concerns from the field and from other stakeholders. In response, they have worked to make further improvements to the formula. Specifically, there has been adjustments to the plan to address the needs of districts with high percentages of poverty in both urban and rural settings.

As the Committee considers possible changes to Am. Sub. HB 166, we strongly urge you to adopt the recommendations of the Fair School Funding Plan. OASBO believes this school funding formula developed by practitioners in the field is a legacy and that it is THE opportunity to get school funding right in order to best meet the needs of Ohio's students.

This concludes our testimony. I'm happy to address your questions