



FAIR SCHOOL FUNDING PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ohio has long needed a rational, transparent, comprehensive and – most of all – fair system for funding its schools. Unfortunately, Ohio’s current school funding formula is not working. In fact, four out of five districts (82%) are now funded off the formula with a cap limiting funding or a guarantee underpinning it. This is because our school funding formula and system is not based on the actual resource needs of our students, schools and communities. To meet the challenges ahead, to continue progress, Ohio needs to change school funding now.

Students need more education than ever to reach their potential and become effective members of our workforce and communities. To sustain our economy and communities, the time to overhaul a school funding system that does not meet student needs – and create one that strengthens our talent and workforce with better education – is now. To achieve these goals, State Representatives Robert Cupp, a Lima Republican, and John Patterson, a Jefferson Democrat, asked local superintendents and treasurers to develop a comprehensive, fair plan with feedback from other frontline educators.

Today, after fifteen months of hard work, we present the Fair School Funding Plan. It is an exceptional proposal built from the ground up by the educational leaders. It’s the right way for Ohio to fund education to help our students, economy, and communities navigate the future.

The Fair School Funding Plan’s new formula will provide instructional resources to ensure high quality education for Ohio’s children. Nearly all base funding (95%) is for classroom instruction and instructional support costs, including classroom teaching (60%), educational supports (15%) and school operations (20%). Decisions to spend base funds will be locally controlled. How much each district gets is based on the actual cost of educating its students, its income level, and its property values. Over time, the formula will minimize funding guarantees and caps. It will allocate state funds using a rational, defensible formula.

Beyond base funding, the state must respond strategically to critical needs that impact some districts more than others. Thus, the Fair School Funding Plan includes additional state aid to accomplish the following:

- Address issues associated with poverty and mental health
- Help special needs, gifted, and new English language learners
- Upgrade educational technology and learning materials
- Bolster vital STEM skills (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)
- Support high-quality preschool for young children
- Improve school security, and lower the age of school bus fleets to enhance safety
- Send school choice funds directly to each student’s actual education provider (school)
- Fund the important services of our Career Technology and Educational Service Centers

The time is now for the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan. It is Ohio-built. It bases state school funding on actual student need to succeed. It treats all Ohio school districts and taxpayers fairly, based on capacity to pay. We ask our colleagues in the General Assembly and all Ohioans to consider its provisions, in their entirety, as an essential roadmap to guide our decisions on school funding in the years ahead. Together, we strive to ensure that Ohio’s children will have the quality educational opportunities they all deserve. And together, we can adopt a comprehensive, fair school funding plan that meets the needs of Ohio’s children, future workforce, economy, and communities in the years ahead. It’s the right change to continue our progress and Ohio needs it now.

State Representative Bob Cupp
Republican, Lima, Ohio

State Representative John Patterson
Democrat, Jefferson, Ohio

