



January 18, 2023

Ohio Elected Official:

Funding for public education in Ohio was deemed unconstitutional in 1997, but over the years Ohio legislators have failed to develop a funding plan. Today there is still an over reliance on property tax under the current model, and the model doesn't create a funding base that is equitable for every student. NOW is the time to let go of the past, move forward by developing a plan that will adequately support learners and our future in this state with a meaningful, experiential, and modern education. Leaders in this state must come to the conclusion that funding every student with a basic state share is essential, leading to both student success and success for Ohio.

We propose a \$9,000 per student foundation base for every Ohio student. This is less than the \$11,306 per student state average reported on the Ohio State Report Card today. This not only will resolve the 1997 DeRolph unconstitutional school funding decision, but still place some ownership on local communities to fund a portion of their school districts through property taxes or school income taxes. Our legislators need to value every Ohio student. A foundation/base cost per pupil to operate school districts needs to be identified and funded.

It is no longer feasible to expect small local communities to fund the lion's share of the cost. The state share differs from community to community. How is this fair or equitable to students or taxpayers in Ohio? We must do better in this state, and developing a basic funding per student model is absolutely the way to go. The current issues that we all face are destroying our educational institutions, sending a message that we do not support ALL students and our schools in this state, and driving away quality teachers. Ohio has to step up!

Leaders in this state have pushed aside this crisis for too long. The deficits in the funding model, lack of flexibility, and inability for tax dollars to grow have created difficult financial issues for districts across the state, and certainly in our own community. The cycle of continuously going back to the local community for funding is destructive to our communities by creating adversarial relationships between teachers and other staff and the families they serve. Our legislators should be promoting healthy and

strong communities. Citizens are divided, and funding public schools has become a political chip to fight over. This madness must stop!

A free and public education is one of the most important and fundamental programs that we can provide to the children of Ohio and this country. Investing in their futures, is an investment in all of our futures, and in this state. The world today demands that its youth receive all of the basics, plus a variety of physical, cultural, and creative experiences in order to be successful. In a post-pandemic world there is a greater need (more than ever before) for social-emotional support programs and the expertise in which to provide them. Ohio should be determining how to meet these needs and be an educational leader in this country. Ohio was once rated in the top 10 states for education...now, Ohio ratings continue to fall. Why? The answer is simple...Ohio has an unfair and unconstitutional state funding model that does not provide a basic foundation amount needed by any school district to educate any student. Please fund a basic per pupil foundation of \$9,000 (still lower than the state average report on the 2021-22 Report Card) to operate school districts in Ohio.

Teaching professionals know what students need and how young people learn best and it's time to put the standardized testing era behind us, and truly innovate education in this state. It is time to pay for our future by investing in our children. We know poor states or and less than adequate education systems lead to other kinds of additional expenses, support, and money that will cost far more than a proposed basic education foundation of \$9,000 per student. The state should also consider adding additional money for students who cost additional money such as special education, English Language Learners, children who come from impoverished backgrounds, and other metrics. This will require adequate funding AND creative and thoughtful curriculums.

Again, we can pay for a high quality education and school experience now, or we can pay more later through incarcerations, retrainings, welfare, high crime rates, and healthcare cost increases because we have failed in early interventions and providing resources to our youth. Some other states have a foundational payment. Ohio needs to get back on top and lead. Please take action and fund our public school systems and our students!

Thank you.
Holli Hansel
Director of Communications