

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Stephen Dyer, OEA Director of Government Relations, Communications and Marketing

Cell: (614) 560-6299 | dyers@ohea.org

Reporters on deadline, please write, "Help, I'm on deadline!" as the subject of your e-mail message.

Ohio Education Association Urges Senate to Quickly Pass SB 376 After Companion Legislation was Approved in House

COLUMBUS – December 4, 2020 – The Ohio Education Association (OEA) applauds the Ohio House for passing Substitute House Bill 305 by an overwhelmingly bipartisan 84-8 vote*, better known as the Fair School Funding Plan (FSFP), and urges Senate members to quickly take up and approve the companion legislation in their chamber, Senate Bill 376. The FSFP represents a critical step toward addressing Ohio's school funding crisis and to finally ensure that Ohio's students are given the state resources needed to receive a world-class education.

"OEA believes that Ohio should enact a student-centered formula that is equitable, adequate, predictable, and that ensures that all students have the resources to succeed regardless of where they live or their family's income," OEA President Scott DiMauro said in testimony before the House Finance Committee on Tuesday. "The FSFP formula represents the best hope for necessary structural change in the way Ohio funds the education of 1.7 million students." DiMauro's full testimony is attached to this message.

Ohio's current school funding system was deemed unconstitutional in 1997 by the Ohio Supreme Court's *DeRolph v. State of Ohio* ruling. OEA extends its deepest gratitude to Speaker Cupp, Representative Patterson, Senators Lehner and Sykes, other legislators, and education leaders for their hard work to deliver the fair school funding system our children and communities deserve more than 20 years later. "Ohio's students have waited decades to get what they need. The Ohio Senate must act now to pass SB 376 and finally make our children their priority," DiMauro said.

The funding plan would provide an additional \$1.99 billion in state aid when fully phased in and provides about 70% of the increased funds to the poorest urban, small town, and rural districts in the State, substantially reducing the need for property tax levies especially in our poorest communities. It recognizes the increased per-pupil costs of educating economically disadvantaged students and transporting students with disabilities, while calling for studies to determine the real costs of serving gifted children, students with special education needs, English learners, e-schools, and Educational Service Centers. FSFP also ends the practice of tying each district's local share to fluctuations in the property value of other districts, determining the local share by using local property values (60%) and income of district residents (40%).

The plan would also end the use of gain caps and would reduce the number of districts from the state's funding guarantee to fewer than ten of Ohio's 613 districts. Caps and guarantees are artificial constraints a legislature has to put on school funding because districts receive either too much or too little funding under the formula. The more districts on caps and guarantees, the worse the state's formula is at calculating educational need. Ohio's current system is so bad at accurately calculating student need that every district in the state is either capped or guaranteed. "Accurately calculating what students need this is quite a welcome shift," DiMauro said.

OEA applauds the FSFP provisions that directly fund charters and vouchers, replacing the current pass-through funding system and creating a system that is fair to public school districts and charters, as well as local taxpayers. As Ohio braces for the voucher expansion that is coming with Senate Bill 89, these changes will prevent public school districts from having to raise property taxes to continue to subsidize tuition to private, mostly religious schools that perform worse than their public counterparts, according to a [recent analysis by the Cincinnati Enquirer](#).

"No school funding model is perfect, but the FSFP formula focuses on what students need to receive a high-quality education," DiMauro said. "The Senate must do its part and pass its version of the bill now. After nearly 30 years waiting for the state to fix school funding, Ohio's children can't wait any longer."

** The vote was held open past the actual floor vote to accommodate any members who were not present during it, so the vote tally may change*

About OEA

OEA represents more than 120,000 teachers, faculty members and support professionals who work in Ohio's schools, colleges, and universities to help improve public education and the lives of Ohio's children. OEA members provide professional services to benefit students, schools, and the public in virtually every position needed to run Ohio's schools.