

RESOLUTION EXPRESSING SUPPORT TO FULFILL OHIO'S CONSTITUTIONAL MANDATE TO FUND A THOROUGH AND EFFICIENT PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

The Board of Education of the Berea City School District, held a public meeting, at Berea-Midpark High School, 165 E. Bagley Road, Berea, Ohio 44017 at 7:00 p.m. on March 22, 2023 with the following members in attendance: Ana Chapman, Cori Farris, Rick Mack, Neal Postel, Heather Zirke.

Heather Zirke moved and Neal Postel seconded the adoption of the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Ohio Constitution requires the General Assembly to provide enough funding to secure a "thorough and efficient system of common schools throughout the State."; and

WHEREAS, a group of school superintendents and treasurers led by State Representatives Robert Cupp and John Patterson, developed the Fair School Funding Plan that included a number of recommendations to meet the Constitutional mandate; and

WHEREAS, the 134th Ohio General Assembly passed into law a six-year phase-in of the Fair School Funding Plan and appropriated funding, which amounted to one-third of the cost of full implementation of the plan; and

WHEREAS, the legislation implementing the phased-in Fair School Funding Plan did not include the recommended funding for economically disadvantaged students and the proposed study of the cost of educating economically disadvantaged students called for in the Fair School Funding Plan; and

WHEREAS, Ohio's current fiscal position is one of tremendous strength as verified with a recent contribution to the Budget Stabilization Fund of \$727 million, and Ohio state tax revenues continue to far exceed expenditures for the current fiscal year, positioning the State to have a projected budget surplus at the conclusion of the year in excess of \$5 billion; and

WHEREAS, Governor DeWine proposed a current biennial budget that continues to phase in the funding of the Fair School Funding Plan but uses FY2018 data inputs to determine base cost funding (which results in a deficit of close to 25% in the funding for the actual costs), does not include the recommended study of the cost of education for economically disadvantaged students, and recommends an expansion of the EdChoice voucher program; and

WHEREAS, the 135th Ohio General Assembly has introduced proposed legislation creating a Backpack Scholarship Program (House Bill 11 and Senate Bill 11), which significantly increases the number and availability of vouchers for students to attend private schools at the expense of the public taxpayer; and

WHEREAS, Ohio's non-partisan Legislative Service Commission has estimated the Backpack Scholarship Program will cost approximately \$1.13 billion in FY2025 of the new biennial budget if all 185,400 newly eligible non-public students take a scholarship under House Bill 11 and \$528 million in each of FY 2024 and FY 2025 under Senate Bill 11; and

WHEREAS, such vouchers will be available to all families and students, including those who have never attended the Berea City School District or any other public school, and for whom state funding has never been provided to the Berea City School District or any other public school; and

WHEREAS, voucher programs have recently expanded in New Hampshire, Wisconsin, and Arizona, and students who have never attended a public school now comprise more than 75% of the vouchers being used in each of the aforementioned states; and

WHEREAS, under a universal Backpack Scholarship Program, Ohio would be authorizing an excessive, and fiscally irresponsible, rebate/refund program that will subsidize families currently paying tuition at private schools; and

WHEREAS, private schools accepting students with public tax vouchers would not be required to accept all students but would be permitted to retain their selective admission policies without enforcement of other laws applicable to public schools; and

WHEREAS, parents using the vouchers will exact far more tax dollars out of the system than they typically pay annually in property tax; and

WHEREAS, Ohio taxpayers and local communities will bear the brunt of having to subsidize parent choice for those parents who choose to never enroll their children in Ohio's quality public schools; and

WHEREAS, the 135th Ohio General Assembly has also introduced House Bill 1, proposed legislation that would make numerous changes to Ohio property taxes; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 1 would eliminate a property tax relief program, commonly referred to as the "10% rollback," on residential and agricultural property which was instituted in 1972 (the same time that the state income tax was created) and would automatically result in an unvoted tax increase of \$1.221 billion for residential and agricultural taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, in an attempt to offset the unvoted tax increase, House Bill 1 proposes to reduce the assessment percentage on residential, agricultural, business and commercial property from 35% to 31.5% without understanding whether or not H.B. 920 tax reduction factors will be triggered; and

WHEREAS, based on calculations provided by our Treasurer/CFO, the revenue loss to

Berea City Schools in the first year of implementation would be approximately **\$182,594** if House Bill 1 passes and the H.B. 920 reduction factors apply and would be approximately **\$2,942,593** if House Bill 1 passes and H.B. 920 reduction factors do not apply. These revenue losses would continue annually.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Berea Board of Education that this Board reaffirms its commitment to free accessible public schools which are adequately and equitably funded to guarantee a comparable education for ALL children.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Board opposes expansion of the EdChoice voucher program, House Bill 11, Senate Bill 11 and any funding programs, vouchers, educational savings accounts, or other plans, that have the effect of diverting public tax dollars from public schools to private schools.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Board opposes House Bill 1 and any plan for taxes that reduces funding from Ohio public schools and children.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Board reaffirms its appreciation for the diversity of our community, including those community members who are on a fixed income or otherwise cannot afford an increase in their property taxes, and urges the Ohio legislature to focus on efforts to provide tax relief to those community members who most need it.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Board requests that the Ohio General Assembly and the Governor of Ohio commit to fully funding the Fair School Funding Plan as it was initially recommended including current inputs and including conducting the proposed study to determine the cost of educating economically disadvantaged children.

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Treasurer is authorized to deliver or cause to be delivered this resolution through email and mail a certified copy to the following:

House Speaker Jason Stephens

House Minority Leader Allison Russo

Senate President Matt Huffman

Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio

Representative Adam Bird, Chair of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee

Representative Phillip Robinson, Jr., Ranking Member of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee

Senator Andrew Brenner, Chair of the Senate Education Committee

Senator Catherine Ingram, Ranking Member of the Senate Education Committee

Representative Bill Roemer, Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee

State Representative Daniel Troy, Ranking Member of the House Ways and Means Committee

Representative Bride Rose Sweeney

Representative Thomas F. Patton

Senator Matt Dolan

Members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee: Representatives Sarah Fowler Arthur, Sean P. Brennan, Gary Click, Don Jones, Beth Lear, P. Scott Lipps, Gayle Manning, Derek Merton, Joseph A. Miller, III, Jessica E. Miranda, Andrea White, Josh Williams and to the office of Governor Mike DeWine.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall be in full force and effect from and immediately after its adoption and shall supersede any prior resolution or act of this Board, which may be inconsistent or duplicative with the provisions of this resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that it is hereby found and determined that all formal actions of this Board concerning and relating to the passage of this resolution were taken in an open meeting of this Board, and that all deliberations of this Board were in meetings open to the public, in compliance with legal requirements including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Ayes: Chapman _____ Farris _____ Mack _____
 Postel _____ Zirke _____

Nays: NONE _____

Caroline A. Farris

President
Ana Chapman

Vice President
[Signature]

Member

[Signature]

Member
[Signature]

Member