

## School Funding Update

The Ohio Fair Funding Plan has gotten quite a bit of attention in the news lately. Why? Because Ohio's current funding formula for schools is seriously flawed.

Representative Bob Cupp (R-Lima) and Representative John Patterson (D-Jefferson) formed a workgroup to address the unfair school funding practices in Ohio. The group, comprised of superintendents and treasurers from across the state, represent different types of districts, from urban to rural and everything in between. Several legislators also participated in many of the meetings, in addition to educators from across the state. I am proud to be a part of this work.

Representatives Cupp and Patterson have taken into consideration what today's students really need to succeed. We have developed a plan to meet these needs, while also being fair to Ohio's 610 school districts and taxpayers.

Funding as it stands today does not function as a formula, but more of a patch. It is not based on any type of analysis that projects what Ohio's students need to find success in their education. Today, districts are compared to others across the state. That means, what happens in a district in northwestern Ohio could affect Lakota's funding. Under the proposed plan, all districts will be treated equally and based on what is going on inside their own borders.

The bi-partisan Fair School Funding Plan is based on the actual costs of education in Ohio. It takes into consideration basic instructional resources, what students in poverty need to succeed, as well as our students with special needs, gifted and English learners. It also includes dollars for safety and security and social and emotional needs. Investment in career tech, STEM skills (science, technology, engineering and math), as well as educational service centers are also part of the plan.

To calculate the base cost and distribution of funds, the Fair School Funding Plan uses research and experience. It accounts for the actual costs of running a school district – not arbitrary ones. This includes teacher-to-student ratios, instructional materials and technology needs. Distribution of funds will be based on property value and income within individual school districts, with 60 percent coming from property value and 40 percent from income.

The plan targets 95 percent of the funding to support student learning. Beyond the base funding, districts will receive additional financial support for students living in poverty, providing access to high-quality preschool for disadvantaged four-year old children and 1:1 technology among others.

As Representatives Cupp and Patterson ask their fellow legislators to make the Fair School Funding Plan into law, I encourage you to educate yourself. Visit the website at <https://sites.google.com/view/ohiofairschoolfunding> to read the plan. You can also follow along on Twitter @OHSchoolfunding.

I would also like to take this opportunity to invite you to attend Lakota's second annual Military Commitment Ceremony on Tuesday, April 30. The event will begin at 7 p.m. and will take place at the Lakota East Freshman building. I hope you will join us as we recognize our graduating seniors who are choosing to serve our country after high school.

*Jenni L. Logan is the treasurer and CFO for Lakota Local Schools. Follow her on Twitter @LakotaCFO.*