



AN ALLIANCE OF OHIO'S URBAN SUPERINTENDENTS AND TEACHER UNION PRESIDENTS

TO: The Honorable Mike DeWine, Governor, The State of Ohio

**FROM: Eric Gordon, CEO, Cleveland Metropolitan School District, Ohio 8 Co-Chair
Julie Sellers, President, Cincinnati Federation of Teachers, Ohio 8 Co-Chair**

DATE: June 5 , 2020

RE: Impact of COVID 19 on K-12 Public Schools

**CC: David James, Superintendent, Akron Public Schools
Pat Shipe, President, Akron Education Association
Paul Palomba, President, Canton Professional Educators Association
Dr. Jeffrey Graham, Superintendent, Canton City Schools
Laura Mitchell, Superintendent, Cincinnati Public Schools
Shari Obrenski, President, Cleveland Teachers Union
Dr. Talisa Dixon, Superintendent, Columbus City Schools
John Coneglio, President, Columbus Education Association
David Romick, President, Dayton Education Association
Dr. Elizabeth J. Lolli, Superintendent, Dayton Public Schools
Dr. Romules Durant, Superintendent, Toledo Public Schools
Kevin Dalton, President, Toledo Federation of Teachers
Justin Jennings, CEO, Youngstown City School District
Larry Ellis, President, Youngstown Education Association
Paolo DeMaria, Ohio's Superintendent of Public Instruction
Rep. Larry Householder, Speaker of the Ohio House
Sen. Larry Obhof, President of the Ohio Senate
Rep. Emilia Sykes, Ohio House Minority Leader
Sen. Kenny Yuko, Ohio Senate Minority Leader
Rep. Don Jones, Ohio House Primary & Secondary Education Committee Chair
Rep. Phillip Robinson Jr, Ohio House Primary & Secondary Education Committee Ranking Mem
Sen. Peggy Lehner, Ohio Senate Education Committee Chair
Sen. Teresa Fedor, Ohio Senate Education Committee Ranking Member
State Board of Education Members**

The Ohio 8 Coalition writes today to follow up on the following ongoing and critical K-12 matters. Although we will connect by telephone and email, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us through our lobbyist Scarlett Boudier at Scarlett@advocacyandcommunication.org

- 1) Request to meet with Governor DeWine:
- 2) Requiring the use of Curriculum developed by statewide working group:
- 3) Leverage State of Ohio procurement capacity for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE);
- 4) Use of Governor DeWine's CARES Act Discretionary funds; and

5) Distribution of federal CARES Act Title I funds.

1) Request to meet with Governor DeWine or Designee

We respectfully request dedicated time with you or your designee to walk through the issues we've outlined in this and previous memos. As we all know there are many matters of consequence evolving in real-time and a live conversation will allow us to best understand the direction of your administration and how we can be helpful. For example, the immediate use of CARES Act dollars in the manner outlined below. We will make ourselves available based on what is best for you or your designee.

2) Requiring the use of Curriculum developed by statewide working group

Several members of our leadership team (Dr. Elizabeth Lolli, Eric Gordon, and David James) and Ashland Superintendent Doug Marrah were included in a statewide workgroup to develop a guidance document for Ohio schools. Part of this work included the creation of a compressed English Language Arts(ELA) and math curriculum K-12. These documents were exclusively crafted to take into account the demands of student learning needs and the realities of teachers in the coming school year with the context of limitations placed upon all of us by COVID 19. Significant time was spent on these documents. The intent was to set a consistent standard for the state related to ELA and math regardless of district type or student ability. It would also provide a baseline for learning within the context of COVID 19, helping to set the stage for a true return to normal learning in subsequent school years. We were advised, however, that this curriculum would now be a 'reference document' and not actually *required* for school districts. This decision is counter to our understood purpose of our work and as a result, is unlikely to meet its intended purpose of providing a consistent, statewide, learning opportunity for students. This change in direction with a recommended curriculum versus a "suggested resource" also has implications for testing modifications. Without the opportunity to "normalize" and recover curriculum that was lost, students who had little or no connectivity during the recent closure fall further behind. This equity issue is inexcusable. The curriculums that were written with the intent of a modified testing requirement would allow districts to catch up and recover lost learning for students by providing a deeper more focused curriculum in literacy and math. If it is not a required change in curriculum or even strongly recommended, those districts that did not have complete connectivity for ALL students must teach the Ohio standards as written as well as the standards that were missed. Simply stated, this is not equitable and or reasonable. Ohio students stand to lose without a strong focus on a modified curriculum for at least one full year. Although we understand why the administration might be hesitant to mandate any policy statewide, in this case it is an extraordinary and needed mandate to ensure equitable learning for students and consistency for teachers.

3) Leverage State of Ohio procurement capacity for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Ohio has led the nation in establishing optimal health and safety standards during COVID-19, and we cannot stop now. Sheltering in place, however, has shone a light on the challenges of securing PPE and securing them at competitive rates and in a timely manner. Our districts are attempting to address this challenge locally and working as a Coalition to leverage our buying power. It is clear, however, that leadership from the State of Ohio to help expedite a response to this need for not only school districts but other sectors as well. In that vein, the Ohio 8 Coalition respectfully requests Ohio do the following to help ensure we continue our leadership on matters related to health and safety.

- Implement statewide coordinated purchasing of PPE for K-12 educators and staff.
- Implement statewide coordinated purchasing of hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies to ensure consistent and adequate access for K-12 communities.

4) Use of Governor DeWine's CARES Act Discretionary funds

It is our understanding that the state is in the process of submitting its application for the education funding included in the first CARES Act. We urge the state to request and disburse those funds immediately to Ohio’s school districts. *The Ohio 8 Coalition believes the best use of CARES Act Discretionary funds would be for statewide broadband capacity building and to support Compensatory Services for students with disabilities as required by IDEA.* For context families with lack of access to broadband among Ohio 8 districts ranges from 15% to in excess of 35%. Regarding IDEA Compensatory services, the Ohio 8 school districts have the largest percentage of special needs students in the State. These services are critical in fulfilling our obligation to students with disabilities.

5) Distribution of federal CARES Act Title I funds

The Ohio 8 Coalition urges the State of Ohio not to ignore the intent of the Congressional CARES Act which is to provide support and relief to students most in need. Congress chose to use the Title 1 formula to distribute funding and Title 1 is focused on students living in poverty. The U.S. Department of Education has muddied the waters, suggesting these limited resources can and should be given away to all children regardless of their family’s income. The Ohio 8 Coalition recommends following the letter of the law and supporting students most in need with the CARES Act funding.

The past few months have laid bare the inequities that exist across our state, which is why Ohio must distribute the CARES dollars as they were directed to by Congress, especially since Indiana and Pennsylvania have already done so. Following watered-down guidance from the USDOE will weaken Ohio’s ability to address the unique needs of low-income children, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth. If educational parity is our goal, Ohio must not dilute CARES Act Title I dollars but instead reserve those funds for students who are living in poverty.

Below is a snapshot from each of The Ohio 8 Coalition members on how USDOE non-binding guidance on the CARES Act Title I funds would reduce the funds available to serve students most in need. This totals over \$10 million for our districts alone. All numbers are estimates based on available information at the time of this memo.

School District	District amount using Title 1 funding formula	District amount using USDOE funding formula	Reduction
Cleveland	\$26,584,939.54	\$24,330,423.76	\$2,254,515.77
Dayton	\$10,445,596.77	\$10,217,102.57	\$228,494.20
Youngstown	\$4,643,313.66	\$4,190,746.88	\$452,567.44
Cincinnati	\$20,952,010.12	\$16,089,199.51	\$4,862,810.61
Akron	\$9,947,723.77	\$8,958,357.72	\$989,366.05
Canton	\$5,970,168.05	\$5,786,660.27	\$183,507.78
Toledo	\$13,247,846.91	\$12,462,939.20	\$784,907.71
Columbus	\$26,824,399.73	\$25,874,318.71	\$950,081.56