



AN ALLIANCE OF OHIO'S URBAN SUPERINTENDENTS AND TEACHER UNION PRESIDENTS
www.ohio8coalition.org

**Testimony to Senate Finance
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The Ohio 8 Coalition**

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Pat Shipe, President, Akron Education Association
Superintendent Adrian E. Allison, Canton City School District**

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Coley, Ranking Member Skindell and members of the Senate Finance Committee. My name is Kevin Dalton, and I am President of the Toledo Federation of Teachers and Co-Chair of The Ohio 8 Coalition. With me today are my colleagues Pat Shipe, President of the Akron Education Association and Canton City School District Superintendent Adrian E. Allison. We are happy to be here to offer this committee The Ohio 8 Coalition's perspective on three issues of primary concern in the state's Operating Budget.

The first issue we'd like to discuss is the School Transportation Study Commission.

Transportation costs are an ongoing concern for public schools across the state where, for most districts, state funding that supports student transportation has not kept pace with actual costs, and policies have made it difficult to efficiently transport students. The Ohio 8 Coalition's schools are no exception.

Members of the Ohio House of Representatives, through their work on HB 64, have taken a step in the right direction toward giving this issue the attention it so desperately needs by creating a school transportation task force. Unfortunately, the senate removed this important taskforce.

School transportation policies are of great concern to both urban and rural districts across the state, including our friends from the Coalition of Rural and Appalachian Schools who share many of our challenges and concerns.

The Ohio 8 encourages you to elevate the school transportation conversation in the General Assembly by reinstating the school transportation task force. We also recommend you strengthen its impact in two ways:

- First, include three school district representatives with transportation expertise on the taskforce - one transportation director from each of the following - an urban, suburban, and rural school district.

- And second, ensure that HB 64 identifies the topic areas that must be addressed by the taskforce including, but not limited to, the motor fuel excise tax, the cost and lack of funding for school buses, operational challenges associated with transporting to district, charter, and nonpublic school buildings, and barriers to considering alternative fuels.

The second issue we'd like to discuss is charter school accountability and transparency.

In addition to the charter school accountability and transparency conversations that are taking place in the Senate related to HB 2 and SB 3, HB 64 also addresses critical components of this conversation.

The Ohio 8 Coalition believes HB 64 can help ensure taxpayer dollars are being appropriately spent to support the educational needs of students by increasing charter school financial transparency.

The Ohio 8 Coalition encourages you to include the following requirements related to charter schools in HB 64:

- Establish requirements that charter school financial records be publicly audited and disclosed.
- Establish additional requirements that prohibit a charter school from reopening under a new name with the same sponsor, operator, board, or treasurer.

Finally, we'd like to discuss school funding stability

The Ohio 8 Coalition remains committed to advocating for school funding stability. Our preliminary review of the Senate's approach to school funding indicates a heavy reliance on supplements and bonuses¹, which total nearly \$324 million. While these bonuses and supplements will have a large impact during the biennium, it begs the question of sustainability and stability beyond the next two years.

Thank you for the opportunity to share these recommendations. We look forward to continuing to help in any way we can as you work on this legislation. I am happy to answer any questions.

The Ohio 8 is a strategic alliance composed of the superintendents and teacher union presidents from Ohio's eight urban school districts – Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo and Youngstown. The Ohio 8 Coalition's mission is to work with policy makers to improve academic performance, increase graduation rates and close the achievement gap for urban children throughout Ohio. The Coalition carries out its mission by working closely with legislators, educators, parents, labor and community officials. The Coalition brings a shared administrator-teacher voice to help shape state education policy.

¹ District Supplements: technology, transportation. District Bonuses: graduation, and third grade reading