



2025 STATE BUDGET AND LEGISLATIVE POSITION SUMMARY

as of March 3, 2025

The Ohio 8 is a strategic alliance composed of the superintendents and teacher union presidents from the following Ohio urban school districts—**Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Lorain, Toledo, and Youngstown**. The Coalition is governed by a Leadership Council, currently co-chaired by Dr. Romulus Durant, superintendent of Toledo Public Schools and Pat Shipe, president of the Akron Education Association. The Coalition carries out its mission by working closely with legislators, educators, parents, labor, and community officials and brings a unique shared administrator-teacher voice to help shape state education policy and practice. Below is a summary of the Coalition’s State Budget Priorities.

LEGISLATIVE POSITION SUMMARY

1. SUPPORTS the Fair School Funding Plan:

- a. Continue the formula phase-in of 83% in FY26 and 100% in FY27.
- b. The formula phase in does not account for recent increases in inflation. Known as ‘inputs,’ any increases in the formula phase in are likely lost if adjustments for inflation are not included in the formula.
- c. Restore temporary transitional aid guarantee, formula transition supplement, and transportation guarantee to 100% (the Executive Budget suggests 95% of current levels in FY26 and 90% in FY27).

2. SUPPORTS District Control of Facilities: School districts should not be forced to hand over school buildings at rates below market value or based on an arbitrary enrollment definition. A school district’s master facility plan and the local community should drive such decisions, not external parties.

3. SUPPORTS Collective Bargaining: The State should not interfere in locally controlled and approved agreements between educators and school administrators. Assigning teachers to classrooms based on convenience rather than who is the best educator for that grade, that classroom and students runs counter to best practice. Additionally State grade band licensure requirements already allow a significant level of flexibility making sure that those with an expertise in primary grade and secondary grades are placed in the classrooms that are aligned with their training and expertise.

4. SUPPORTS K-12 Transportation Efficiency: District transportation systems must prioritize efficiency starting with the shortest route from student pick up/drop off, standard bell schedules, communication deadlines, and revision of antiquated terms and practices that do not reflect the demands of the present-day system.

5. SUPPORTS Voucher Accountability: The appropriate use of public tax dollars that support all voucher programs must include how those dollars are used, reports that reflect that use, and the student academic outcomes achieved as a result of those funds.

6. **AGAINST Income Tax Bill (Senate Bill 3):** Any effort to shift or reform Ohio's tax system that does not hold harmless public institutions that receive public funding places an additional burden on local taxpayers.

LEGISLATIVE POSITION DETAIL

1. **Fair School Funding Plan:** The Executive Budget has suggested a continued phase in of Years 5 (83%) and 6 (100%) of the 6-year Fair School Funding Plan. The Governor's budget does not include adjustments for inflation (known as 'inputs'), which will likely result in any increase via the phase in being wiped out by recent and ongoing increases in inflation.

POSITION:

- a. Support the Governor's phase in of Year 5 and Year 6.
- b. Adjust the formula ('inputs') so that it includes increases in inflations.

2. **District Control of Facilities:** The Executive Budget suggests that school districts should not be forced to hand over school buildings at rates below market value or based on an arbitrary enrollment definition. This provision is not supported by any clear rationale or school district facility master plan and undermines taxpayer investment in such facilities.

POSITION:

- a. Existing law allows for a school building to be sold at market value, this must remain.
- b. Decisions to sell school district property should be based on district needs outlined in school facility master plans, not external parties that are unaccountable to the local taxpayer arbitrarily defining school building enrollment policy and practice.

3. **Collective Bargaining:** The Executive Budget suggests that randomly assigning educators to classrooms regardless of experience or seniority is best for children and their learning environment. Best practice does not support this provision and puts at risk the quality of classroom instruction for students.

POSITION:

- a. This provision should be eliminated as it is not supported by best practice.
- b. This provision seeks to undermine collective bargaining agreements already determined at the local level by local leaders.
- c. Existing State law already includes grade band licensure requirements, which ensures that the most highly qualified educators are placed in the correct classroom.

4. **Transportation Efficiency:** Existing state laws and rules do not allow for the most efficient transportation possible. The following recommendations can help address some of the challenges that presently exist including but not limited to:

- a. Utilize standardized bell schedules for all buildings.
- b. Do **not** levy transportation penalties until due process is completed by ODE. Presently fiscal penalties accumulate every single day until ODE makes a due process-related decision; this has resulted in hundreds of millions of dollar penalties.
- c. Revise communication deadlines and requirements.
- d. Better define "calamity days" to include local emergencies, extreme weather conditions, and major issues impacting the condition of bus fleets (i.e., theft).

- e. Redefine “Consistent” and “Prolonged” noncompliance to Consistent: 10 days and Prolonged: excess of 20 days (vs. existing law which is 5 consecutive days or 10 days in a school year).
- f. Work with public school districts to redefine the variables(distance, efficiency, etc) that constitute “Impracticality” to ensure there is consistency from one school year to the next.

POSITION:

- 1. Revise existing school transportation laws to reflect the provisions supported by multiple K-12 school districts and leaders as outlined above.

5. Voucher Accountability: For the past 20 years, Ohio’s voucher program has expanded from a limited program for students of a particular income level to one that, at 400% of FPL, would include 80% of all students in Ohio.

- a. Vouchers remain unproven and are counter to the concept of public education.
- b. Voucher funds can be used for private and parochial schools, which do not have the same accountability regarding the use of public funds.
- c. Most children using vouchers have never attended a public school creating a program supporting families or communities that are not economically disadvantaged nor in communities some children already in non-public schools will use taxpayer dollars to supplant their existing tuition payments.

POSITION:

- 1. Ohio 8 does not support the unaccountable expansion of vouchers.
- 2. Institutions that receive public funds used for vouchers should be subject to annual audits, implementation of academic assessments (and related outcomes) for all students, and should be reporting of those data to the State on an annual basis.
- 3. Public record laws should apply to school buildings, charter schools, private schools and parochial schools that accept voucher funds including but not limited to organizational budget documents, board meeting minutes, and any financial information that is required of traditional public schools to produce within the context of public record requests.

6. Income Tax Reform-Senate Bill 3: This bill suggests a statewide flat income tax of 2.75%.

POSITION:

- 1. Any effort to reform Ohio’s tax system must hold harmless public institutions that receive public funding.
- 2. If public institutions are not held harmless, local communities are placed in a position of raising local taxes to for various services such as schools, parks, fire, police, etc.