



Juvenile Justice Coalition

Fact Sheet: Ohio Fair School Funding Plan April 2019

Ohio's new Fair School Funding Plan proposed by Representatives Bob Cupp (R-Lima) and John Patterson (D-Jefferson) would increase state spending for Ohio's 610 public school districts by roughly \$740 million over the next two years. The proposed formula calculates the cost of providing an average child with a quality education, while providing additional funding for students in poverty, special education, and gifted education programs. This fact sheet provides an overview of the plan's funding allocations as it relates to school safety.

Background – School Safety:

Research shows that school safety is more likely to be achieved through investments to create supportive and positive school climates instead of punitive options. Investments in school security – such as security personnel and hardware (i.e. cameras, metal detectors, etc.) – are “associated with more incidents of school crime and disruption[,] higher levels of disorder in schools,” increased violence due to a heightened sense of students to engage in self-protection, and “negatively impacts students’ perception of safety and even increases fear among some students.”¹ Additionally, placing law enforcement and security personnel in schools cannot prevent all school violence. School resource officers and armed guards have been present at four out of the five worst school shootings in U.S. history, including Columbine and Parkland.² Finally, the FBI has warned that “[d]isciplinary action alone, unaccompanied by any effort to evaluate the threat or the student's intent, may actually exacerbate the danger.”³

Instead, research clearly shows that creating a supportive school environment that provides students with additional mental health and social-emotional supports not only improves school safety, but also improves academic outcomes for all students and long-term student success. Studies conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)⁴ and the U.S. Secret Service and

¹ National Association of School Psychologists, *Research Summaries: School Security Measures and Their Impact on Students* (2018), available at https://www.nasponline.org/Documents/Research%20and%20Policy/Research%20Center/School_Security_Measures_Impact.pdf.

² Marjory Stoneman Douglas (2018), Marshall County High (2018), Santana High School (2001), and Columbine High School (1999).

³ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective*, available at <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/safety/fbi-report.pdf>.

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Department of Education⁵ have recognized that the most effective way to prevent school shootings is to put in place systems that identify youth who are struggling and may become dangerous.

Fair School Funding Plan: School Safety Breakdown: The base cost funding model proposed by the Cupp/Patterson plan attempts to calculate the amount it would take to educate an average child in Ohio. The formula then builds on this amount to provide additional funding to students with greater needs, including students who live in poverty, special education needs, are English language learners, or face transportation barriers, etc.

Under the formula each school district would receive:

- 1) A *base cost* amount per pupil for non-personnel safety and security items.
- 2) A *base cost* amount to support up to five social, emotional, security or life support personnel.
- 3) *Add-on funding* for economically-disadvantaged youth in impoverished school districts of an additional \$150 per student be added to the annual \$272 per student amount that Ohio currently provides for economically-disadvantaged students faced with poverty.

The additional funding for economically-disadvantaged youth can be used to:

- 1) Provide additional resources to increase social, mental health, and emotional supports for students, including school counselors, nurses, and social workers.
- 2) Expand wrap-around services for children and fund additional resources for ongoing academic support services including academic intervention and remediation services, dropout prevention, extended school day or school year, and expand use of technology.
- 3) Provide district wide professional development to teachers and school administrators to provide greater insights into the needs of economically disadvantaged students and enhance abilities to recognize and accommodate those needs.

Recommendations: Effective investments in school safety should focus on 1) improving school climates and increasing access to trauma-informed social emotional supports, including school-based addiction and mental health services and licensed prevention and treatment professionals, such as counselors, social workers, and nurses and 2) putting in place research-based protocols to address threats implemented by individuals specifically trained in threat assessment.

Based on the research outlined above, we recommend the following changes to the Fair School Funding Plan:

Recommendation 1: **In the base cost formula, combine the non-personnel and personnel safety and security line items and set a maximum per student amount that can be used for non-personnel hardware.** Funding non-personnel security hardware on an ongoing basis may force school districts to over-invest unnecessarily in physical security measures that further harden and militarize schools. School districts should have the flexibility to make decisions

⁵ United States Secret Service and United States Department of Education, *The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of School Attacks in the United States* (July 2004), available at <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/preventingattacksreport.pdf>.

about how to best invest in safety measures to meet the needs of their students, particularly if physical security thresholds have been reached.

Recommendation 2: In the base cost formula, remove the maximum personnel limitations. These limitations could restrict schools that wish to use this funding to hire additional or part-time personnel. For example, schools may find that they can work with community partners to combine funding and share an employee that works both in the community and in the school.

Recommendation 3: In the base cost formula, require that any qualified crisis intervention and threat assessment personnel receive specific, school-based threat assessment training within the “Social/Emotional/Security/Life Support” personnel line item. Many law enforcement officials and security personnel are not trained in threat assessment to evaluate threats based on the specific circumstances, including the nature of the threat, the student’s personality, and the family, school, and social dynamics.

Recommendation 4: Add the language of the poverty add-on to the “Structural and Student Supports” section of the base cost formula. Although more resources should be directed specifically to economically-disadvantaged youth for trauma-informed social, mental health, and emotional supports, research shows that these are the exact supports that help keep all students safe. Including this language in the base cost formula will ensure that every child gets the support that they need to be engaged and successful students, while keeping schools safe.

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