

**Ohio School Boards Association
Buckeye Association of School Administrators
Ohio Association of School Business Officials**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Media contacts listed at end of release

Statewide education groups thank legislature for easing coronavirus challenges

COLUMBUS — The Ohio School Boards Association, Buckeye Association of School Administrators and Ohio Association of School Business Officials appreciate the changes approved today by the Ohio General Assembly aimed at easing the challenges for public school districts and their students during the coronavirus outbreak. This is an unprecedented situation, and the legislature acted swiftly to provide relief for educators and students. We applaud their work and their willingness to work with our associations to address the needs of our members and Ohio's children.

While districts have been fervent in their efforts to continue to provide educational opportunities for students in creative ways, educators have been worried about meeting student testing and other state requirements. The passage of House Bill (HB) 197 provides relief for school leaders, staff and students.

Other favorable changes include providing local flexibility to grant high school diplomas, waiving retention requirements for the third-grade reading guarantee and permitting boards of education to hold public meetings electronically. HB 197 also would resolve questions around the primary election for school levies, with absentee voting set to end on April 28.

Meanwhile, changes in HB 197 related to the Educational Choice Scholarship Program (EdChoice) will prevent the scheduled list of 1,227 voucher-eligible school buildings from taking effect for the 2020-2021 school year. While we are pleased to see that the implementation of the list will be halted, we will continue to work for long-term changes to the program.

The bill still will allow approximately 500 buildings to remain on the EdChoice eligibility list, and new vouchers will be granted in those districts. Many of the 500 buildings were placed on the eligibility list as a result of a flawed state report card system. These districts will continue to see increases in voucher costs at a time when budgets will be stretched thin as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

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