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Media contacts at end of release

Analysis of Ohio Senate's school-funding proposal raises concerns over future budgets

COLUMBUS — Three statewide education management organizations today announced a report published by the Ohio Education Policy Institute (OEPI) that analyzes the Ohio Senate's proposed school-funding formula. Introduced as part of the state biennial budget bill, House Bill (HB) 110, the Senate proposal harkens back to the state's funding formula last used in fiscal years (FY) 2018 and 2019.

The report was commissioned by the Ohio School Boards Association, Buckeye Association of School Administrators and Ohio Association of School Business Officials. Conducted by Dr. Howard Fleeter, economist and school-funding consultant for OEPI, the report reveals weaknesses in the Senate's plan that the groups say could prove extremely difficult for lawmakers in the next state budget. Not only does the Senate proposal restore a years-old formula, Fleeter's analysis also reveals that the Senate does not update key data to determine the state and local share of education funding.

Fleeter's findings call attention to the complications this poses for future legislatures as updates to the formula become necessary.

"By using data that is now three bienniums old, the Senate's school funding proposal will create significant disruptions and likely be much more costly in the FY24-25 biennium when property values, income and enrollment are updated," says Fleeter.

While property valuation and income data may lag somewhat when school-funding calculations are made, it is customary for the General Assembly to use the most recent data available in order to make the most appropriate calculations for the state's contribution to education.

The Senate plan uses property values from 2014, 2015 and 2016 despite values being available through 2020. It also uses income data dating back to 2013 despite such data being available through 2019. The plan also uses the student enrollment counts and teacher salary data from FY 2019, despite the availability of more current data.

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The groups expressed their hope for the Conference Committee on HB 110 to use the most current data available to reflect today's needs and capacities of Ohio's school districts and their students they serve.

A copy of Dr. Fleeter's report is attached.

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