



everychild. one voice.

May 26, 2009

The Honorable Ted Strickland
Governor of the State of Ohio
Ohio Statehouse
Columbus, Ohio

Dear Governor Strickland,

The Ohio PTA supports legislation and appropriations for public schools that will ensure all children and youth in Ohio a high quality education.

The Ohio PTA would like to thank you and your administration for including our association in the discussions on Reforming Education and School Funding in Ohio. Many of our members participated in the public forums you held across the state. Ohio PTA leaders and members are grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of these ongoing discussions.

We appreciate your willingness to work with stakeholder groups and the legislature to make a good plan even better. Your administration has done an outstanding job of keeping us informed on and part of the process to address many of the shortfalls of our current school funding system.

We appreciate your understanding and support of the whole child, in particular the importance of parental involvement in a child's education. As such, it is vital that our voice, PTA's voice, continues to be heard over the coming months as the budget bill becomes finalized. Our leaders have met with you and also area legislators concerning both the original proposal and the recently passed substitute House bill in an effort to better understand ways we can work with all stakeholders to advocate for our children.

As the Ohio's oldest and largest volunteer parent association, we applaud your efforts to propose true education reform for Ohio's children. We realize that this is an even bigger challenge than usual, given the tough economic times we face across our state and nation.

As an organization we support the goal of systemic reform involving all of the stakeholders across the state and we feel the components of the Ohio Evidence-Based Model will improve the quality of our children's education as well as accountability measures. We also understand that no plan is absolutely perfect for all schools but, we believe the reforms are headed in the right direction.

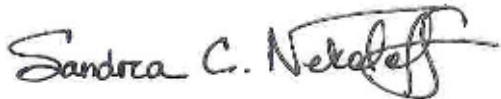
There are areas of Reform Plan that are clearly aligned with the focus of the Ohio PTA and that we feel will strengthen the relationship between home and school such as:

1. The Ohio PTA supports the concept of a Family and Community Engagement Team in each school district and has offered our assistance in further developing a model program for schools. We appreciate that the bill recognizes the importance of family and community involvement in the education and well-being of every child as well as parents being actively involved in the decision-making process within our schools.
2. The Ohio PTA supports the need of each school district to have trained medical personnel available to every child throughout the entire school day, which also includes school wellness coordinators. The Ohio PTA supports legislation and appropriations which safeguard the health of children and youth.
3. The Ohio PTA supports having all schools accountable to the students, families and communities they serve, meaning increased accountability for charter schools. Ohio PTA supports legislation requiring all schools, public and nonpublic, receiving public tax monies be mandated to meet the same mandates and requirements including classroom ratio, highly qualified teachers, educational services, personnel ratio and reporting mechanisms.
4. The Ohio PTA supports the implementation of developmentally appropriate full-day everyday kindergarten in all school districts in Ohio.
5. The Ohio PTA supports the efforts to have the State take on a larger share of the fiscal responsibility for the education of our children and to address the issue of phantom revenue, which is detrimental to many of our school districts. Since 1978, the Ohio PTA has been urging the legislature to produce solutions to remedy the financial situations in Ohio's schools and to provide the necessary funds to assure a quality education for all public school students.

While there are components within the proposal that Ohio PTA does not have a position on and are therefore beyond the scope of our legislative platform, **such as lengthening the school year, developing a residency program and career ladder for teachers, and creating a "Teach Ohio" program**, we pledge our continued commitment to working together with the Governor's Office, the Ohio Department of Education, our legislators, and other stakeholder groups toward an education and funding reform package that will work for all schools and benefit all children in our state.

The Ohio PTA sees this as the beginning of an exciting process to change and improve the educational and funding system in our state. We would again like to thank you for your continued efforts to address and design an education and school funding reform plan that works for the State of Ohio and meets the needs of all our students in the 21st century.

Sincerely,



Sandra C. Nekoloff, President
Ohio PTA