



**AN ALLIANCE OF OHIO'S URBAN SUPERINTENDENTS AND TEACHER UNION PRESIDENTS**

**TO:** The Honorable Mike DeWine, Governor, The State of Ohio

**FROM:** Eric Gordon, CEO, Cleveland Metropolitan School District, Ohio 8 Co-Chair  
Julie Sellers, President, Cincinnati Federation of Teachers, Ohio 8 Co-Chair

**DATE:** May 13, 2020

**RE:** Impact of COVID 19 on K-12 Public Schools

**CC:** David James, Superintendent, Akron Public Schools  
Pat Shipe, President, Akron Education Association  
Paul Palomba, President, Canton Professional Educators Association  
Dr. Jeffrey Graham, Superintendent, Canton City Schools  
Laura Mitchell, Superintendent, Cincinnati Public Schools  
Shari Obrenski, President, Cleveland Teachers Union  
Dr. Talisa Dixon, Superintendent, Columbus City Schools  
John Coneglio, President, Columbus Education Association  
David Romick, President, Dayton Education Association  
Dr. Elizabeth J. Lolli, Superintendent, Dayton Public Schools  
Dr. Romules Durant, Superintendent, Toledo Public Schools  
Kevin Dalton, President, Toledo Federation of Teachers  
Larry Ellis, President, Youngstown Education Association  
Paolo DeMaria, Ohio's Superintendent of Public Instruction

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The Ohio 8 Coalition follows up with you today to communicate about two critical items.

- 1) Use of Governor DeWine's CARES Act Discretionary funds and;
- 2) Distribution of federal CARES Act Title I funds

Use of Governor DeWine's CARES Act Discretionary funds

It is our understanding that the state is in the process of submitting its application for the education funding included in the first CARES Act. We urge the state to request and disburse those funds immediately to Ohio's school districts. *The Ohio 8 Coalition believes the best use of CARES Act Discretionary funds would be for statewide broadband capacity building and to support Compensatory Services for students with disabilities as required by IDEA.* For context families with lack of access to broadband among Ohio 8 districts ranges from 15% to in excess of 35%. Regarding IDEA Compensatory services, the Ohio 8 school districts have the largest percentage of special needs students in the State. These services are critical in fulfilling our obligation to students with disabilities.

Distribution of federal CARES Act Title I funds

The Ohio 8 Coalition, which exists to bring a shared administrator-teacher voice to help shape state education policy, urges the state not to ignore the intent of the Congressional CARES Act which is to

provide support and relief to students most in need. Congress chose to use the Title 1 formula to distribute funding and Title 1 is focused on students living in poverty. The U.S. Department of Education has muddied the waters, suggesting these limited resources can and should be given away to all children regardless of their family’s income. The Ohio 8 Coalition recommends following the letter of the law and supporting students most in need with the CARES Act funding.

The past few months have laid bare the inequities that exist across our state, which is why Ohio must distribute the CARES dollars as they were directed to by Congress. Following watered down guidance from the USDOE will weaken Ohio’s ability to address the unique needs of low-income children, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth. If educational parity is our goal, Ohio must not dilute CARES Act Title I dollars, but instead reserve those funds for students who are living in poverty.

The CARES Act requires that funds allocated to local educational agencies under Sections 18002 and 18003 are subject to equitable services “in the same manner as provided under Section 1117” of the ESEA” (Title 1). With this requirement, Congress made an explicit decision that these funds are to be distributed to all Title I eligible students, ensuring the funds support students in poverty. By issuing non-binding guidance suggesting states distribute the funds NOT according to Title I eligibility, but through a formula based solely on residency and regardless of need, the U.S. Department of Education subverts the intent of Congress and weakens the ability of the funds to do the greatest good.

Below is a snapshot from several of The Ohio 8 Coalition members on how following USDOE non-binding guidance would reduce the funds available to serve students most in need. All numbers are estimates based on available information at the time of this memo.

School District	District amount using Title 1 funding formula	District amount using USDOE funding formula	Reduction
Cleveland	\$26,584,939.54	\$24,330,423.76	<b>\$2,254,515.77</b>
Dayton	\$10,445,596.77	\$10,217,102.57	<b>\$228,494.20</b>
Youngstown	\$4,643,313.66	\$4,190,746.88	<b>\$452,567.44</b>
Cincinnati	\$20,952,010.12	\$16,089,199.51	<b>\$4,862,810.61</b>

On behalf of its students, and students around the state The Ohio 8 Coalition vigorously requests Ohio respect the will of Congress and distribute the funds based on the law outlined in the CARES Act.