



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

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THE OHIO 8 COALITION REQUESTS OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOLLOW FEDERAL CARES ACT LAW AND PRIORITIZE DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS TO STUDENTS LIVING IN POVERTY

U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) suggests dollars be given to wealthy

COLUMBUS - The Ohio 8 Coalition strongly urges Ohio 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 I formula to distribute funding and required school districts to use Title I methodology for supporting low-income students in non-public schools. USDOE has muddied the waters, suggesting these limited resources can and should be given away to all children regardless of their family's income.

Just like Potbelly and Ruth Chris were not the intended recipients for the limited Paycheck Protection Program, neither are those schools or students with sufficient resources to support student learning.

"If educational parity is our goal then we must not dilute CARES Act Title I dollars, but instead reserve those funds for students who are living in poverty." said Eric Gordon, Co-Chair of the Ohio 8 Coalition and CEO of the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. "Shifting to remote learning, closing school buildings, and preparing for the next year, will require all available resources for students living in poverty."

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 meant by Congress. Following watered down guidance from the U.S. Department of Education will weaken Ohio's ability to address the unique needs of low-income children, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth.

"We need the State of Ohio to distribute these funds per the Federal CARES Act law, not based on an off the cuff suggestion from USDOE for students who do not need the support." said Julie Sellers, Co-Chair of the Ohio 8 Coalition and President of Cincinnati Federation of Teachers. "Our public-school students, teachers, and staff around the state are succeeding despite unusual circumstances and Ohio should be able to use every federal dollar available to bolster that success for those 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 students Title I eligible, 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 equitable services provisions of the CARES Act [Section 18005(a)] and weakens the ability of the funds to do the greatest good.

“Ohio has the opportunity to use these funds to support students who need it the most in every school in this time of uncertainty and stress. Children in poverty face huge barriers every day, and we should be building them up, not reducing the money available to help them”, said Eric Gordon, Co-Chair of the Ohio 8 Coalition and CEO of Cleveland Metropolitan School District.

On behalf of its students, and students around the state The Ohio 8 Coalition vigorously requests Ohio respect Congressional reference to provide equitable services to children living in poverty.

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The Ohio 8 is a strategic alliance composed of the superintendents and teacher union presidents from Ohio’s eight urban school districts – Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo and Youngstown. The Ohio 8 Coalition’s mission is to work with policy makers to improve academic performance, increase graduation rates and close the achievement gap for urban children throughout Ohio. The Coalition carries out its mission by working closely with legislators, educators, parents, labor and community officials. The Coalition brings a shared administrator-teacher voice to help shape state education policy.