

August 5, 2019 – Legislative Report by Tom Moscovic

The Beat Goes On even when Your General Assembly is on Summer Break

Tom Moscovic – Legislative Chair

Governor Signs Budget

Gov. Mike DeWine’s signature, funding for Ohio schools will increase by \$263 million for the 2019-20 school year, which is a four percent increase with a two percent increase slated for the 2020-21 school year. The bill also provides \$20 million for districts to purchase school buses, according to an Ohio House news release.

Officials from the Ohio School Boards Association, Ohio Association of School Business Officials and Ohio’s Superintendent Association issued a joint statement about the new two-year budget.

“We appreciate the priority placed on Ohio’s children in the biennial budget bill, House Bill 166,” the news release states. “By investing in the new Student Wellness and Success funds, Gov. Mike DeWine and the Ohio House and Senate recognize the non-academic barriers that are facing our students. These deeply needed resources will go a long way to help students overcome these challenges.”

The organizations also applauded DeWine’s vetoes of three property tax-related provisions “that would have had a negative impact on school districts. The vetoes will help preserve districts’ ability to effectively manage their local share of funding,” the release said.

“Our organizations pledge to work with state leaders to ensure the state’s new investment in education moves Ohio forward, and we offer our assistance in the effort to reform our school-funding system while also continuing to address the non-academic barriers our students face,” the organizations stated.

Lake County Funding

County	District	2018-19	2020-21	Change	Pct. Change	Students 2019
Lake	Fairport Harbor	\$4,242,275	\$5,420,362	\$1,178,087	27.8%	696
Lake	Kirtland	\$809,908	\$932,421	\$122,512	15.1%	1,166
Lake	Madison	\$13,482,999	\$14,883,608	\$1,400,609	10.4%	2,833
Lake	Mentor	\$14,398,069	\$15,381,481	\$983,411	6.8%	7,472
Lake	Painesville City	\$25,594,154	\$27,760,374	\$2,166,220	8.5%	2,755
Lake	Perry	\$3,400,179	\$4,013,570	\$613,392	18.0%	1,616
Lake	Riverside	\$5,913,237	\$6,429,748	\$516,511	8.7%	3,905
Lake	Wickliffe	\$1,923,900	\$2,548,808	\$624,909	32.5%	1,297
Lake	Willoughby-Eastlake	\$14,414,964	\$17,014,736	\$2,599,772	18.0%	7,551

Ohio's Public School System Ranked 28th in the Nation in New Report

Ohio's public school system is the 28th best in the country, a new report finds.

The ranking from WalletHub found students perform well on tests, as Ohio schools ranked No. 13 for math test scores and No. 15 for reading test scores.

"The report aims to paint a picture of the quality of the public school system in each state," WalletHub analyst Jill Gonzalez said in an email. It accounts for class size, funding, instructor credentials, and performance.

"It's a well-known fact that the quality of public schools is oftentimes a question of funding," Gonzalez added. "However, some states seem to be doing better than others even with less money, and this is where schools and authorities could learn from each other, by looking into the strengths and weaknesses of each state."

The report assessed a range of categories, including safety, funding, class size and instructor credentials. The state ranked No. 38 for its pupil-teacher ratio, No. 23 for its bullying incidence rate and No. 12 for the share of families who agree their children go to safe schools.

In the new ranking, Ohio outpaced Michigan (No. 37) and West Virginia (No. 47). The state, however, lagged behind Kentucky (No. 13), Indiana (No. 22) and Pennsylvania (No. 27).

Massachusetts topped the list, followed by New Jersey, Connecticut, Virginia and Vermont. New Mexico finished at No. 51 in the report, which also included Washington, D.C.

Student Debt Still Higher in Ohio Than Many Other States

Local college graduates have more debt than those in many other states, despite Ohio's college tuition increasing at slower rates.

The average student who graduated from an Ohio college or university in 2019 had \$30,629 in debt, according to a WalletHub study. That's \$278 more than a 2018 graduate and a nearly 5.5 percent increase from the \$29,037 five years ago.

It's also the 17th highest in the nation, according to Wallet Hub. As a percent of average state income, Ohio graduates are the eighth most in debt.

"The fact that the system is so messed up that people have to have these conversations of I either go to school or it's too much money, is just sort of messed up a little bit," said Gabe Debiasi, a 2018 graduate of Miami University.

Debiasi said he was lucky to only graduate with a few thousand dollars of debt, which he credits to scholarships, dual enrollment classes while in high school and finishing a full year early.

Ohio's average tuition at a public university was \$10,790 during the last academic year, according to the national College Board, the 18th highest of all states. But it has historically been one of the most expensive, said Bruce Johnson, president of the Inter-University Council of Ohio.

The Great Recession led to major cuts in state funding for higher education, especially in Ohio, both in subsidies to colleges and in aid directly to students. Both types of aid still haven't returned to pre-2009 levels, Johnson said. Ohio's recovery from the recession has been slower, so the state's funding has also been slower to return than in other states, he said.

But state leaders and college heads have been doing as much as possible to keep tuition steady, increasing at slower rates than many other states, said Cassie Barlow, president of the Southwest Ohio Council for Higher Education and relatively high tuition (in the 1960s)," Johnson said. "And now we have relatively low state support and relatively moderate tuition."

In-state tuition and fees have increased 1 percent over the last five years at public, four-year universities, according to the College Board. Tuition and fees at Ohio's two-year public schools did not increase from five years ago. Just five states had rates lower than one percent, either not increasing at all or decreasing over the five-year period.

Two witnesses to the current state of Education

Teacher Retires From 'Toxic' Profession in Facebook Post: 'I will not miss what education has become'

Florida teacher Jonathan Carroll retired from his profession in a moving Facebook post. (Photo: Courtesy of Jonathan Carroll)

A Florida teacher's list of "Things I did not sign up for" inspired him to leave his once-beloved profession.

Jonathan Carroll, a social studies teacher at South Lake High School in Groveland, Florida has worked at both private and public schools during his 20-year career. "When I started teaching, I was excited to make an impact on children. I loved every minute of my job," Carroll, 46, a married father-of-two tells Yahoo Lifestyle.

However, in March, feeling disillusioned by the state of his profession — teachers across the country have been striking against overcrowded classrooms and low wages — he started recording his grievances: Overly-digitalized classrooms, high-stakes test scores, burnt-out students, and a yearly salary of 48K.

Last week, Carroll's list helped him reach a decision: He'll retire from teaching on May 28. "So I guess this is it...I am leaving the field of education. I have had so many wonderful memories. But it has become a toxic profession," Carroll wrote on Facebook.

Once believing he would spend his days "Opening minds, debating history, inspiring the next generation to reach higher and learn from the past," Carroll wrote, "I think of all the things I did not sign up for....like micromanaging administrators, mental health counseling, blueprints with no freedom or flexibility (even though you cannot enforce planning), not being considered an expert in my chosen field even though I have a graduate degree. Students overdosing on drugs and collapsing in my classroom when they get back from the bathroom. Active shooter drills. Teachers being armed. Knowing where it is safe to hide in my classroom. Feeding and clothing my students. Buying my own supplies. Being told I should be thankful I have a job and to get over myself. I am tired of the constant testing...tired of everyone else knowing better and being chastised if I dare ask questions or challenge leadership. So this May, I am walking away..."

because I love teaching that I will not tolerate what the state is doing to the educators and children under its care. Unfortunately, these issues will not be resolved until the perception of public education and other state social services change. Then people will band together for the common goal of elevating these necessary resources to the status of respect they deserve. The public has to demand that they receive the time, funding, and resources they require. We need to prioritize education, not just offer it lip-service. Until enough people decide that this is worth making a fuss over, those that are in power have no reason to listen to our hurt, pleas, and fears to make any changes. This will keep happening. It will not get better like this.

Former Teacher Shares Powerful Resignation Letter: 'I won't be in an abusive relationship with public education'

Elementary school teacher Sariah McCall was in her classroom every morning at 6:45 a.m., taught bell-to-bell classes, attended meetings during her planning period and worked assigned lunch and recess duties with little time to eat or go to the restroom. When the bell rang for the 2:15 p.m. student dismissal, she worked an assigned bus or hall duty, followed by lesson and classroom prep. Sometimes, she left school by 5 p.m. At home, McCall would work on more grading and paper work until 11 p.m. or midnight, then finally sleep — and repeat.

But the workload was not sustainable for McCall. Now, she's sharing the powerful resignation letter she wrote explaining why she left teaching for good.

"The only things keeping me from resigning until now were the love I have for my students, the love I have for the act of teaching, and the heavy guilt I feel for my children being negatively impacted by this

in any way: emotionally or academically,” McCall wrote to the Charleston County School District in November.

“However, I cannot set myself on fire to keep someone else warm,” McCall wrote as a slight to an “inspirational” teacher quote that likens teachers to candles that must “consume itself to light the way for others.”

November 5, 2018

Superintendent Charleston County School District
75 Calhoun Street Charleston, SC 29412

Dear Dr. Postlewait,

Please accept this letter as notice of my resignation from public education effective immediately. Please understand that this has nothing to do with my children, Ms. Wallace, or the rest of the faculty and staff at Murray-LaSaine. I couldn't have dreamed of a more perfect fit for my class, administrator, and school. I thought I had found my forever school. In fact, the only things keeping me from resigning until now were the love I have for my students, the love I have for the act of teaching, and the heavy guilt I feel for my children being negatively impacted by this in any way: emotionally or academically. However, I cannot set myself on fire to keep someone else warm. The systemic abuse and neglect of educators and other public service workers in the state of South Carolina should have its citizens so enraged. The unrealistic demands and all-consuming nature of the profession are not sustainable. I am still a human being. There was no time to be a functioning human being and give this job all the attention and love it deserves. This career with its never-ending list of “extra duties and responsibilities” that we are not given the resources for completing. I cannot let a career dictate and demand all of me for another minute, and I will not be bullied into continuing to do so out of misguided guilt for possibly neglecting the children. It is unrealistic to expect this much from people. We're teachers, but we're still people. I have compared the systematic expectations of the profession to the list of signs of abuse provided by the Domestic Abuse Hotline. If you replace “he” with “public education,” it would almost match perfectly with what we are all going through across America. If I were to say that my partner is putting me through all of this abuse and mistreatment, people would be putting me in a shelter and insisting that I leave him. But because this is my calling and I must sacrifice myself for the sake of the children, then it's really not that big of a deal. Because If I really love my job and I really love the kids, then I should be willing to do whatever it takes and make whatever sacrifices I need to in order to give them everything they need. Do more with less time, funding, and resources. Take more of the blame, guilt, and responsibility. Be ready to sacrifice your personal life, mental health, and physical safety. Don't be a complainer. After all, if you only work 7-3 for 180 days of the year, then what could there possibly be to complain about? If only it were that easy. In the hardest act of selfishness, I have ever been faced with, I must put myself over the demands of helping raise other people's children. I won't be in an abusive relationship with public education any longer. I will model to my current and past students what self-respect, setting hard boundaries, and standing your ground for what's right looks like in action. Through this whole situation, I have fiercely defended how much I love my children and how much I love the act of teaching. I won't let anyone try to put that blame there. It is because I love teaching that I will not tolerate what the state is doing to the educators and children under its care. Unfortunately, these issues will not be resolved until the perception of public education and other state social services change. Then people will band together for the common goal of elevating these necessary resources to the status of respect they deserve. The public has to demand that they receive the time, funding, and resources they require. We need to prioritize education, not just offer it lip-service. Until enough people decide that this is worth making a fuss over, those that are in power have no reason to listen to our hurt, pleas, and fears to make any changes. This will keep happening. It will not get better like this.