

Deliberations continue on K-12 funding overhaul bill

The House Finance Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee has continued to hold hearings on legislation -- H.B. 1, commonly referred to as the Cupp-Patterson bill in recognition of its original sponsors -- to overhaul Ohio's approach to funding its K-12 public education system.

Among those testifying was State Superintendent of Public Instruction Paolo DeMaria, who expressed support for the proposed six-year phase-in implementation process while pointing out that adopting a new framework without providing full support for funding would serve little purpose.

Most of the debate has centered not around the approach, but rather on the increased cost, estimated at about \$2 billion annually.

Under the proposed plan, the pass-through approach to funding charter schools and some private school vouchers would be eliminated, potentially reducing the tension that currently exists between those entities and traditional public schools and districts. According to one of the bill's sponsors, Representative Jamie Callender (R-Concord), the need to implement this provision in a manner that doesn't leave charters vulnerable to future line-item veto has been discussed "at length."

Under H.B. 1, the base per pupil allocation is set at \$7,200. An interim formula would be established for charter schools generally relying on the same calculations as used to determine that of traditional public schools.

In addition to a number of district superintendents and treasurers who have testified in support of the bill, the Ohio School Boards Association, Buckeye Association of School Administrators and Ohio Association of School Business Officials have done so, as well.

