

# ONTARIO SCHOOLS LOBBYING FOR STATE FUNDING CHANGE

## *A Message from Superintendent Lisa Carmichael*

Ontario Schools Treasurer Randy Harvey, Board Member/Legislative Liaison Attorney Jerod Them, and I went to the Statehouse in Columbus on February 7, and most recently on March 15, to encourage legislators to change the way our school district is being funded. These Statehouse visits provided opportunities to meet with our state legislators and discuss issues impacting Ontario Schools. It was a golden opportunity to put a local face on these important issues and allow our message to be heard.

The Governor's proposed budget has Ontario Schools netting an estimated \$24,041 loss in State Funding for Fiscal Year 2018. The current law will drastically reduce resources by cutting \$761,056, or \$375 per student, in an annual reimbursement for local Tangible Personal Property (TPP) taxes that were eliminated. That \$761,056 in annual lost revenue represents 4.5% of our \$16 million operating budget. In order to replace this lost revenue, Ontario Schools would have to pass a 2.7 mill new money levy.

On March 14, 2017, the Ontario Board of Education passed a School Funding Resolution that describes the urgency of the State to eliminate the funding gap. Copies of the resolution were mailed to State Representative Mark Romanchuk and President of the Senate Larry Obhof. The resolution stresses that Ontario Schools already spends the least amount per pupil of any of the 35 schools in Richland County and the five (5) surrounding counties. Our district has only increased base wages a total of 1% for ALL employees over the last six years. We have held the line on employee benefit costs, using the same tools that have been successful in the private sector, such as creating a high-deductible health care plan, implementing plan restrictions, including mail-order and generic prescriptions, and increased co-pays. Ontario Schools have continually worked to implement permanent spending reductions, and **it's time that the State provides us with the dollars they owe us.**

It's important for the Ontario taxpayers to know that the Administration and Board of Education remain committed to getting the State to give us the money we should be receiving. We're going to carry on the fight in Columbus for the dollars that are rightfully owed to us. We will continue to urge the Ohio General Assembly to offset the TPP Fixed Rate Hold Harmless Payments against any school with an unfunded State Formula Cap amount that's greater and to fund the remaining State Formula Cap amount fully. Our voices will definitely be heard at the Statehouse.

