



CORAS

Coalition of Ohio
Rural and Small-Town
Schools

Randy Gardner

Former Chancellor of Higher Education & SCH Senior Advisor

Jayson Selgo

Archbold Area Local School Superintendent

The Lobbying Landscape in Ohio

Every major education advocacy organization in Ohio operates from Columbus — the state's political center. While these groups advocate for charter schools, urban districts, school choice, and ideological priorities, **CORAS is the only organization exclusively dedicated to rural and small-town Ohio schools.**

⚠ Every competing organization is headquartered in Columbus. CORAS is different — we are from rural Ohio, representing rural Ohio. Our communities deserve a seat at the table, and we're making sure they have one.

Organization	Focus	Location
Alliance for High Quality Education	High-performing, above-average wealth districts	N. High St., Columbus
The Ohio 8	Eight major urban school districts	S. Third St., Columbus
Center for Christian Virtue	Parental choice and Gospel-based policy	Broad St., Columbus
Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools	Charter school quality and growth	Broad St., Columbus
School Choice Ohio	Individual student needs through school choice	Dublin Rd., Columbus
Fordham Institute	Educational excellence and charter authorizing	E. Broad St., Columbus
Buckeye Institute	School choice and local control	E. Broad St., Columbus
Americans for Prosperity	Family-directed education funding (36 states)	140 offices nationwide



State Senator Andrew Brenner
Senate District 19



Representative Sarah Fowler Arthur
House District 99

MEMORANDUM

To: All House Members
From: Representative Fowler Arthur and Senator Andrew O. Brenner
Date: October 9th, 2025
Re: First Meeting of the Joint Caucus on School Choice

Dear Colleagues,

Senator Brenner and I would like to invite you to join us for the inaugural meeting of the Joint Caucus on School Choice on **October 14th at 4pm in the State Room**. Our first speaker will be the Department of Education and Workforce who will provide an overview of the entire school choice landscape.

Senator Brenner and I thank those who became members of our esteemed caucus. Please contact my office if you plan to be in attendance.

Sincerely,

Senator Andrew Brenner

Representative Sarah Fowler-Arthur

A New Threat to Public School Funding

In October 2025, State Senator Andrew Brenner (Senate District 19) and Representative Sarah Fowler Arthur (House District 99) formally launched the Joint Caucus on School Choice — a coordinated legislative effort to expand school choice programs in Ohio.



This caucus represents a coordinated effort to redirect public school funding.

- The caucus was formed to advance school choice policy, which redirects public tax dollars to private and charter schools
- Their first briefing came directly from the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce — signaling institutional backing
- This represents an organized, bipartisan legislative caucus with the power to shape budget and policy decisions
- Rural and small-town public schools — already underfunded — stand to lose the most if school choice funding expands without protections

The Statewide Voice for Ohio's Rural and Small Town Superintendents

CORAS equips Ohio's rural and small-town school superintendents with the advocacy, policy insight, and statewide network needed to protect funding, influence legislation, and strengthen local districts.

150+

Districts Represented

Supporting rural and small-town school leaders across Ohio

46

Ohio Counties Served

Connecting superintendents and Educational Service Centers statewide

\$385M

Restored to Rural Districts

Helped correct inequitable funding allocations affecting rural schools

\$470M

Protected Through Advocacy

Prevented significant revenue losses tied to proposed property tax reforms



Rural Superintendents Face Unique Challenges

From funding inequities to staffing shortages and facilities needs, rural districts require strong statewide advocacy and coordinated leadership. CORAS ensures rural voices are represented where Ohio education policy decisions are made — at the Statehouse and beyond.

"CORAS is the most effective, impactful school advocacy organization in Ohio."

— *Dr. Paul Craft, Retired State Superintendent of Public Instruction for Ohio*

How CORAS Supports Superintendents

CORAS delivers three core pillars of support to help rural and small-town leaders navigate the complex landscape of Ohio education policy.



Protect District Funding

Direct engagement in state budget and policy negotiations to secure equitable funding and defend rural school interests. CORAS fights at the table so your district isn't left behind.



Equip Superintendents to Lead

Advocacy tools, messaging, and coordinated strategies that help district leaders effectively engage legislators and policymakers with a clear, unified rural voice.



Deliver Actionable Policy Insight

Clear, timely analysis on funding, staffing, legislation, and student outcomes — translated into practical guidance that rural districts and ESCs can act on immediately.

Recent Legislative Wins

CORAS has delivered measurable results for rural and small-town districts across Ohio. These recent wins reflect the power of coordinated, sustained advocacy at the Statehouse.

Facilities Funding Reform

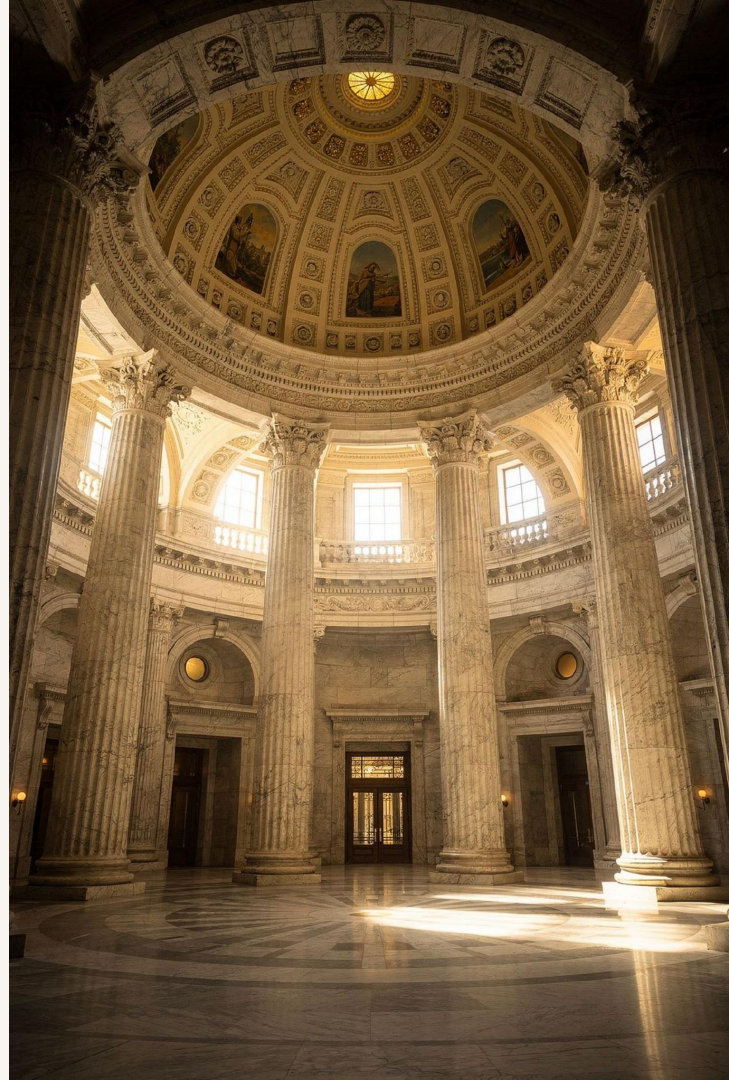
Advanced legislation addressing long-standing and systemic disparities in rural school construction funding — ensuring rural districts have a fair shot at modern learning environments.

Restored Carryover Balance Flexibility

Successfully blocked policies that would have penalized carryover balances, preserving rural districts' ability to maintain reserves and retain local financial flexibility.

Unified Rural Advocacy

Connected superintendents and local leaders across Ohio to advocate with one coordinated voice at the Statehouse, amplifying rural concerns that might otherwise go unheard.



Meet the Team Leading Rural Ohio's Voice at the Statehouse

Executive Director

Dr. Richard Murray has spent more than four decades serving rural and small-town schools across Ohio, leading districts and regional educational service centers. As Executive Director of CORAS, he is the foremost advocate for rural school funding, policy, and service delivery at the state and national level.

CORAS Board Members

- **Monte Bainter** — Board Executive Director Superintendent, Muskingum Valley Educational Service Center
- **Greg Denecker** — Board Member Superintendent, Bluffton Exempted Village Schools
- **Pete Ruby** — Board Member Superintendent, Huntington Local School District
- **Stephanie Starcher** — Board Member Superintendent, Fort Frye Local School District
- **Jason Inkrott** — Board Member Superintendent, Van Buren Local School District
- **Jayson Selgo** — Board Member Superintendent, Archbold Area School District

Sunday Creek Horizons: Our Advocacy Partner

CORAS is supported by Sunday Creek Horizons — a team of seasoned legislators, policy leaders, and communications professionals who bring deep political relationships and proven advocacy experience to the work of protecting rural Ohio schools.

Congressman Zack Space

Co-Founder & President

Represented 16 small counties in southeastern Ohio in Congress. Brings firsthand understanding of rural challenges and the political relationships needed to address them.

Chancellor Randy Gardner

Senior Advisor

33 years in the Ohio legislature and 5 years as Ohio's Chancellor of Higher Education. Understands how state policy shapes the schools that small-town students depend on.

Senator Jay Hottinger

Executive Vice President

28 years in the Ohio General Assembly advocating for rural and small-town communities. Deep legislative relationships and a record of securing meaningful funding wins.

Will Drabold

Co-Founder & Senior Vice President

Award-winning journalist and fundraiser who has raised millions for causes, built coalitions, and helped organizations reach decision makers in Columbus and Washington.

Supporting Staff: Reid Courtney, Director of Government Relations & Issue Advocacy · Michelle Bolin, Director of Events & Engagement · Sarah Bender, CORAS Project Manager

Why Superintendents Engage With CORAS

- **Stay ahead** of legislative and funding changes before they impact your district
- **Strengthen** your district's voice at the Statehouse through coordinated advocacy
- **Collaborate** with rural leaders across Ohio who share your challenges
- **Access** timely policy analysis and practical advocacy support
- **Help shape** statewide education decisions that affect every rural student

Get Involved With CORAS

Participate in statewide advocacy, superintendent collaboration, and policy leadership that strengthens rural and small-town schools across Ohio.

- *Monthly Superintendent Zoom Meetings
 - Join from your office!
- Regional Superintendent Meetings
- *Teacher Recognition Events
 - Celebrate your staff!
- Rural Education Summit

**Unique benefits for CORAS members*



Questions?

CORAS is committed to ensuring that rural and small-town school superintendents across Ohio have the advocacy, policy insight, and statewide network they need to lead their districts with confidence.

Learn More

Reach out to explore how CORAS membership can support your district's voice at the Statehouse.

Connect With Us

Join the network of rural superintendents already shaping Ohio education policy together.



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