

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF OHIO**

**STATE OF OHIO ex rel**  
**BRIAN AMES** : CASE NO.  
:  
Relator, :  
:  
-vs- :  
:  
**OHIO COALITION FOR**  
**EQUITY AND ADEQUACY OF** : **MANDAMUS ACTION**  
**SCHOOL FUNDING** :  
:  
and :  
:  
**STEERING COMMITTEE** :  
:  
and :  
:  
**CATHY JOHNSON** :  
:  
Respondents. :

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**VERIFIED COMPLAINT FOR MANDAMUS**

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**RELATOR**

Brian Ames  
2632 Ranfield Rd  
Mogadore, OH 44260

*Attorneys for Relator*

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Stephen C. Davis (0065838)  
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**RESPONDENTS**

**Ohio Coalition for Equity and  
Adequacy of School Funding**  
50 South Young St., Suite M-102  
Columbus, OH 43215

**Steering Committee**  
50 South Young St., Suite M-102  
Columbus, OH 43215

**Cathy Johnson**  
50 South Young St., Suite M-102  
Columbus, OH 43215

Relator State ex rel Brian Ames states the following for his Complaint against Respondents Ohio Coalition for Equity & Adequacy of School Funding, the Steering Committee, and Cathy Johnson:

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. This is an Action for a writ of mandamus to compel the production of public records of a public agency comprised of multiple governments spending copious amounts of taxpayer funds. Numerous public-school boards formed the Ohio Coalition for Equity & Adequacy of School Funding under Chapter 167 of the Ohio Revised Code, and they fund the Coalition with their own public funds for litigation in the pursuit of equal funding for public schools. Under Chapter 167, the Coalition is a “public agency,” it is comprised of public officials, it is publicly funded, and it performs the public function of litigating on behalf of the same public entities that fund it. Nonetheless, when Relator State ex rel Brian Ames requested certain public records, the Coalition denied his requests claiming that the Coalition does not consider itself a “public body.” This Court should compel this public agency to produce the public records.

## **II. PARTIES**

2. Relator State ex rel Brian Ames (“Relator”) is a person who has standing under R.C. § 149.43 to bring this Action because he made a request for public records, and his request was denied.
3. Respondent Ohio Coalition for Equity & Adequacy of School Funding (“Respondent”) is a public body created under Ohio Revised Code, Chapter 167, which lists its principal place of business at 50 South Young Street, Suite M-102 Columbus, OH 43215. <http://ohiocoalition.org/connect/>

4. Respondent Steering Committee is the governing body of the Respondent and a public body under the Ohio Open Records Act.
5. Respondent Cathy Johnson is the Chairperson of Respondent's Steering Committee, and she is named her in her official capacity.
6. For clarity, this Complaint will refer to all Respondents as "Respondent."

### **III. JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

7. Jurisdiction and venue are proper in this Court because this Court has original jurisdiction under R.C. § 2731.02 and R.C. § 149.43 to issue Relator's requested writ of mandamus.
8. According to Respondent's website, it was organized as a "council of governments pursuant to Chapter 167." ( <http://ohiocoalition.org/about/> )
9. Numerous school districts make up the Respondent's membership. (Id., generally).
10. The numerous school districts work together as a coalition to challenge the constitutionality of certain funding legislation, which impacts funding to the public school system. (Id., generally).
11. According to Respondent's website, "[s]chool districts become members of the coalition by paying dues on a yearly basis." ( <http://ohiocoalition.org/coalition-members/> ).
12. The districts had paid \$0.50 per student until the "Coalition was asked to coordinate the Constitutional challenge of the EdChoice voucher program." (Id.)
13. Now, many districts pay \$2.00 per student to fund the Respondent. (Id.)

14. Consequently, Respondent is largely funded with the taxpayer funds of numerous public-school districts, and the larger the district, the larger the taxpayer contribution.

15. These districts are the Respondent's currently listed members:

Ada Exempted Village School District

Adena Local School District

Alexander Local School District

Allen County Educational Service Center

Alliance City Schools

Ansonia Local Schools

Athens City Schools

Aurora City Schools

Ayersville Local School District

Barberton City School District

Barnesville Exempted Village School District

Beaver Local School District

Bellaire Local School District

Bellevue City Board of Education

Belmont Harrison Vocational School District

Belpre City School District

Berne Union Local

Bloom Vernon Local School District

Bloomfield Mespo Local Schools

Bluffton Exempted Village Schools

Bowling Green City School District  
Bridgeport Exempted Village School District  
Bright Local School District  
Bristol Local School District  
Brown County Educational Service Center  
Brown Local School District  
Buckeye Career Center  
Bucyrus City School District  
Canal Winchester Local Schools  
Canfield Local Board of Education  
Canton City School District  
Canton Local School District  
Cardington-Lincoln Local School District  
Carlisle Local School District  
Carrollton Exempted Village School District  
Cedar Cliff Local School District  
Celina City School District  
Centerburg Local School District  
Chardon Local  
Chesapeake Union Exempted  
Clay Local School District  
Clearfork Valley Local Schools  
Clermont Northeastern Local School District  
Cleveland Heights|University Heights

Clinton-Massie Local School District  
Cincinnati Public Schools  
Columbiana County Career and Technical Center  
Columbiana Exempted Village  
Columbus City School District  
Coshocton City Schools  
Coshocton County JVSD  
Crestview Local School District  
Crooksville Exempted Village  
Cuyahoga Falls City School District  
Danbury Local  
Dawson Bryant Local School District  
Dayton Public Schools  
Deer Park Community City School District  
East Clinton Local School District  
East Guernsey Local School District  
East Knox Local School District  
East Muskingum Local School District  
Eastern Local School District  
Eastern Local School District  
Elida Local School District  
Elyria City Schools  
ESC of Northeast Ohio  
Fairborn City School District

Fairland Local School District  
Fairless Local Board of Education  
Fairview Park City Schools  
Federal Hocking Local School District  
Fort Frye Local School District  
Franklin Local School District  
Galia Jackson Vinton JVSD  
Gallia Vinton ESC  
Gallipolis City School District  
Geneva Area City School District  
Genoa Area Local School District  
Goshen Local  
Greenfield Exempted Village School District  
Greenville City School District  
Hamilton City School District  
Hardin-Houston Local  
Heath City School District  
Hicksville Exempted Village  
Hillsdale School District  
Hudson City School District  
Huntington Local School District  
Indian Creek School District  
Ironton City School District  
Jackson City School District

Jackson Milton Local School District  
James A. Garfield Local School District  
Jefferson County Vocational School  
Jefferson Township Local School District  
Jennings Local School District  
Joseph Badger Local Schools  
Kalida Local School District  
Knox County ESC  
Labrae Local School District  
Lake Local School District  
Lakeview Local School District  
Lakewood Local School District  
Lancaster City Schools  
Lawrence County ESC  
Lawrence County JVSD  
Leetonia Exempted Village School District  
Liberty Union Thurston School District  
Licking County Educational Service Center  
Licking Heights Local School District  
Licking Valley Local School District  
Lima City School District  
Lincolnview Local School District  
Lisbon Exempted Village School District  
Logan Hocking Local Schools



Lordstown Local School District  
Loudonville-Perrysville Ex. Village  
Lucas Local School District  
Marietta City School District  
Mayfield City School District  
Maysville Local School District  
Medina City School District  
Miami Valley Career Technology Center  
Mid-East Career And Technology Centers  
Millcreek West Unity Local  
Minerva Local School District  
Mississinawa Valley School District  
Mohawk Local School District  
Montgomery County ESC  
Morgan Local School District  
Mt. Healthy City School District  
Muskingum Valley Educational Service Center  
Nelsonville York City School District  
New Boston Local School District  
New Lexington School District  
Newcomerstown Exempted Village Schools  
Newton Falls Exempted Village Schools  
Noble Local School District  
Nordonia Hills City School District

North College Hill City Schools  
Northern Local School District  
Northmont City School District  
Northwest Local School District (Hamilton)  
Northwest Local School District (Scioto )  
Northwest Local School District (Stark)  
Northwest Ohio Educational Service Center  
Norwalk City School District  
Norwood City School District  
Oak Hill Union Local School District  
Olmsted Falls City School District  
Osnaburg Local School District  
Paint Valley Local School District  
Pandora-Gilboa Local Schools  
Pickaway County ESC  
Pickaway Ross JVSD  
Pike County Area Joint Vocational School District  
Plain Local Schools  
Pleasant Local Schools  
Portsmouth City School District  
Putnam County ESC  
Reynoldsburg City School District  
Richmond Heights Local School District  
Ridgedale Local School District

Ridgemont Local School District  
Ripley Union Lewis Huntington Local  
Riverdale Local School District  
Riverview Local School District  
Rolling Hills Local School District  
Ross-Pike Educational Service District  
Salem City School District  
Sandy Valley Local School District  
Scioto Valley Local School District  
Seneca East Local School District  
Shadyside Local School District  
Shaker Heights City School District  
Shelby City School District  
Sidney City School District  
South Central ESC  
South Central Local  
South Range Local School District  
Southern Local School District (Columbiana County)  
Southpoint Local School District  
Southwestern City Schools  
Spencerville Local  
Springfield Local Schools  
Springfield City Schools (Clark County)  
St. Bernard-Elmwood Place City School District

St. Clairsville-Richland City Schools  
Stark County Area Vocational School District  
Stark County Educational Service Center  
Steubenville City School District  
Strasburg-Franklin Local School District  
Struthers City School District  
Swanton Local School District  
Sylvania Schools  
Symmes Valley Local School District  
Toledo Public School District  
Trimble Local School District  
Tri-County Career Center  
Trumbull County Educational Service Center  
Tuscarawas Valley Local School District  
Twinsburg City School District  
Union Local School District  
United Local School District  
Van Buren Local School District  
Vantage Career Center  
Vinton County Local Schools  
Walnut Township Local School District  
Warren Local School District  
Warrensville Heights City School District  
Washington County JVS

Washington Local School District  
Washinton-Nile Local School District  
Wauseon Exempted Village School District  
Waverly City Schools  
Wayne Trace Local School District  
Waynesfield Goshen Schools  
Wellington Exempted Village School District  
Wellston City School District  
Wellsville Local School District  
West Muskingum Local School District  
Western Brown Local School District  
Western Local School District  
Westerville City Schools  
Wheelersburg Local School District  
Wickliffe City Schools  
Windham Exempted Village  
Winton Woods  
Wolf Creek Local School District  
Woodridge Local School District  
Wooster City School District  
Worthington School District  
Xenia Community School District  
Yellow Springs Exempted Village School District  
Zanesville City School District

Zane Trace Local School District (Id.)

16. Therefore, the Respondent's membership is almost entirely comprised of public-school boards, which are public bodies under the Open Records Act.
17. The "Steering Committee" is Respondent's governing board.
18. These individuals are listed as the Respondent's current Steering Committee

members:

Jill Ackerman  
Superintendent, Lima City Schools

Monte Bainter  
Superintendent, Logan Hocking Local

Vaughn Bell  
Westerville City School District BOE; minister

Linda Blum  
Northmont City Schools BOE

Eve Bolton  
Cincinnati Public Schools BOE

Eric Brown  
Columbus City Schools BOE; former Chief Justice of the Ohio Supreme Court

A.J. Calderone  
Superintendent, Labrae Local School District

T.C. Chappellear  
Superintendent, Indian Creek Local School District

Michael Collins  
Business owner; former Westerville and State Board of Education member

Walter Davis  
Superintendent, Woodridge Local School District

Steve Dyer  
Lawyer, Former OEA Director of Government Relations, Communications and Marketing; former legislator

Polly Taylor-Gerken

Toledo Public Schools BOE

Dan Heintz  
Cleveland Heights | University Heights BOE; teacher Chardon City Schools

Nneka Slade Jackson  
Richmond Heights Schools BOE

Cathy Johnson, Temporary Chairperson  
Southwestern City Schools BOE; retired teacher; former president of OSBA

Lori Snyder-Lowe  
Superintendent, Muskingum Valley Educational Service Center

Craig McKendry  
Treasurer, Barberton City Schools

Joel Parker  
Treasurer, Elida Local School District

Tom Perkins  
Deputy Executive Director BASA

Beryl Brown Piccolantonio  
Gahanna-Jefferson School District BOE

Eric Resnick  
Canton City School District BOE

Jocelyn Rhynard  
Dayton City Schools BOE

Bob Smith  
Retired school administrator

Ginny Stewart  
Bowling Green City School District BOE

Andy Wilson  
Former member of Fairborn City Schools BOE

Charlie Wilson  
Worthington City Schools BOE; OSU law professor; former OSBA and NSBA president

Donna Wilson  
former Fairborn City Councilwoman; retired teacher

Rick Vilardo, Ex-Officio Member  
Former Westerville City School District BOE; minister

19. Thus, Respondent's governing board is comprised almost entirely of public officials, who are representatives of numerous public-school boards.
20. The Ohio State Auditor has inspected the Respondent's financials, and it noted that Respondent does not maintain a records policy. (See the 2021, Basic Audit attached as Exhibit 1).
21. Recently, Relator emailed the Respondent, and he requested the following records:
  1. the agreement establishing the Coalition and subsequent amendments thereto.
  2. the current bylaws of the Coalition.
  3. any subsequent agreements with members admitted to membership subsequently pursuant to the agreement establishing the Coalition.
  4. the rule(s) for notification of meetings required by R.C. 121.22(F) in effect for the years 2022 and 2023.
  5. the meeting minutes for the years 2022 and 2023.
  6. the current records retention schedule. (See Exhibit 2).
22. On March 31, 2023, Respondent's Chairperson, Respondent Cathy Johnson, acted as the Records Custodian, emailed Relator, and stated the following:

Dear Mr. Ames:

As Acting Chair of the Steering Committee of the Ohio Coalition for Equity and Adequacy of School Funding, I am responding on behalf of all members of the Steering Committee to your letters of March 24, 2023, requesting certain documents of the Coalition.

The members of the Steering Committee have never regarded themselves as a public body, and our legal counsel has advised us that there is no legal precedent



that would require us to do so. Consequently, we have no records to provide to you in response to your letter.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact our legal counsel, Mark Wallach, at (216) 536-9518.

Very truly yours,

Cathy Johnson (Id.)

23. Therefore, the Respondent claims that it is not a public body even though it was formed under Chapter 167 of the Revised Code, it is a coalition of governments, its members are primarily school districts, it performs the public function of litigating on behalf of public entities, and it is primarily funded through taxpayer funds.

24. Respondent refused to produce Relator the records he requested.

25. For example, Respondent refused to produce its by-laws even though it was required to provide them to the State Auditor under Ohio law. (See *Infra*).

26. And Respondent refused to produce its retention schedule, even though the State Auditor's Basic Audit in 2021 noted to Respondent that it was required to maintain a records policy, which would include a retention policy.

27. Respondent cited no exemption or privilege when it denied Relator's request.

### **COUNT I – VIOLATIONS OF OHIO'S OPEN RECORDS ACT**

28. Relator restates all previous paragraphs.

29. Under R.C. § 167.01, a Regional Council of Government is defined as follows:

That governing bodies of any two or more counties, municipal corporations, townships, special districts, school districts, or other political subdivisions may enter into an agreement with each other, or with the governing bodies of any counties, municipal corporations, townships, special districts, school districts or other political subdivisions of any other state to the extent that

laws of such other state permit, for establishment of a regional council consisting of such political subdivisions.

30. R.C. § 167.02 limits membership in a Regional Council of Government to “counties, municipal corporations, townships, special districts, school districts, and other political subdivisions entering into the agreement establishing the council . . .”

31. Therefore, a Regional Coalition of Government is precisely what it sounds like, numerous public bodies banding together to form a new public body.

32. In fact, R.C. § 167.02(C) expressly states that a Regional Council of Government’s membership lists are “public records within the meaning of section 149.43 of the Revised Code . . .”

33. Consequently, the Revised Code expressly contemplates and mandates that a Regional Council of Government’s records are “public records.”

34. Although membership in a Regional Council is not considered a public office in terms of a conflict of interest, the General Assembly did not mince words when designating a Regional Council as a government body.

35. Indeed, R.C. § 167.07(A)(2) expressly states that “A regional council of governments is considered a **public agency** for purposes of Chapter 102, and it is considered a **political subdivision** for purposes of Chapter 2921, of the Revised Code.” (emphasis added).

36. Because a regional council is a public agency under R.C. § 102, its officials are subject to the Ohio Ethics Commission.

37. Therefore, the Revised Code expressly designates a regional council of governments as a political subdivision, and its officials as public officials subject to

ethics obligations—it merely permits these officials to serve dual public roles as a regional council member, as well as maintaining their position on a school board.

38. Under R.C. § 167.04(D), a regional council of governments must notify the State Auditor of its formation, it must also submit its by-laws to the State Auditor, and it cannot enter into any contract until it fulfills its obligations to the State Auditor.

39. Under R.C. § 167.05, a regional council of government is permitted to utilize a county prosecutor as its legal counsel.

40. Under the Ohio Public Records Act, any person may request public records from a public body.

41. Respondent is a public body.

42. Under the Public Records Act, a public body must produce all responsive records to a request promptly unless the records are expressly exempt under the Open Records Act.

43. Here, Relator emailed a public records request to Respondent.

44. Respondent denied Relator's public records request.

45. Respondent did not object to producing these documents, citing any exemption under the Open Records Act.

46. Instead, Respondent erroneously responded that it is not a public body.

47. Under the Ohio Open Records Act, and requester may bring an action for a writ of mandamus to compel the production of public records, receive statutory damages, and recover its costs and attorney fees.

48. Here, Relator is entitled to a writ of mandamus ordering Respondent to produce its public records, statutory damages, costs, and reasonable attorney fees.

49. Relator is additionally entitled to a writ of mandamus to compel Respondent to establish a proper records retention policy.

**WHEREFORE**, Relator respectfully requests that this Court finds for him, and it awards him the following relief:

- a. A writ of mandamus ordering production of documents;
- b. Statutory damages;
- c. Attorney fees;
- d. Costs; and
- e. All other relief this Court deems proper under law and equity.

Respectfully submitted,

**/s/ Matt Miller-Novak**

Matt Miller-Novak, Esq. (0091402)

Steven C. Davis, Esq. (0065838)

Barron, Peck, Bennie, &

Schlemmer, Co. LPA

3074 Madison Road,

Cincinnati, OH 45209

Phone: 513-721-1350

Fax: 513-721-2301

MMN@BPBSLaw.com

SCD@BPBSLaw.com

VERIFICATION

State of Ohio            )  
                                  )SS  
County of Portage        )

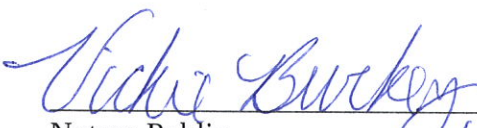

Now comes Brian M. Ames, who, having first been duly cautioned of the penalties of perjury and sworn deposes and says as follows:

1. I am, and have been during all time periods relevant to the foregoing Complaint, a citizen residing in Portage County.
2. I am competent to testify to all matters stated in this affidavit and the foregoing Complaint.
3. I have read the foregoing Complaint and swear that I have personal knowledge of the facts stated therein and that the facts stated therein are true and accurate to the best of my information, knowledge, and belief.
4. Exhibits 1 and 2 are true and accurate copies of the originals.

Further, Affiant sayeth naught.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Brian M. Ames

Before me, a Notary Public in and for said county and state, personally appeared Brian M. Ames who swore to the truth of the foregoing Verification and subscribed same in my presence at Rootstown, Ohio on this 12<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2023.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public  
 VICKIE BURKEY  
Notary Public  
State of Ohio  
My Comm. Expires  
December 13, 2027

4/12/23

# Exhibit 1





# OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE KEITH FABER



PO Box 828  
Athens, Ohio 45701  
(740) 594-3300 or (800) 441-1389  
SoutheastRegion@ohioauditor.gov

Ohio Coalition for Equity and Adequacy of School Funding  
Muskingum County  
205 North Seventh Street  
Zanesville, Ohio 43701

We have completed certain procedures in accordance with Ohio Rev. Code § 117.01(G) to the accounting records and related documents of the Ohio Coalition for Equity and Adequacy of School Funding, Muskingum County, Ohio (the Coalition), for the years ended June 30, 2020 and 2019.

Our procedures were designed solely to satisfy the audit requirements of Ohio Rev. Code § 117.11(A). Because our procedures were not designed to opine on the Coalition's financial statements, we did not follow *generally accepted auditing standards*. We do not provide any assurance on the Coalition's financial statements, transactions or balances for the years ended June 30, 2020 and 2019.

The Coalition's management is responsible for preparing and maintaining its accounting records and related documents. Our responsibility under Ohio Rev. Code § 117.11(A) is to examine, analyze and inspect these records and documents.

Based on the results of our procedures, we found the following significant compliance or accounting issues to report.

## Current Year Observations

1. We noted that the Coalition has established rates for public and vocational school being \$0.50 per pupil and educational service centers \$0.05 per pupil. During procedures performed, we noted the Coalition sends out invoices in which the member schools and educational service centers are supposed to report their Average Daily Membership (ADM) and calculate the dues owed to the Coalition. During scans of supporting records, we noted some members do not provide ADM for which their payment is based upon. Additionally, we noted that no support is kept or verification is done by the Coalition to ensure accurate ADM amounts are provided and appropriate dues are paid by members. Our prior audit also reported this matter.
2. Ohio Rev. Code § 149.43(E)(2) provides that every public office must have a policy in place for responding to public records requests. Generally, a public records policy cannot: (1) limit the number of public records the office will make available to a single person; (2) limit the number of public records the office will make available during a fixed period of time; and (3) establish a fixed period of time before the office will respond to a request for inspection/copying of public records unless that period is less than eight hours. However, pursuant to Ohio Rev. Code § 149.43(B)(7)(c), the policy may limit the number of public records the public office will physically deliver by U.S. Mail or other delivery service to ten per month unless the person certifies to the office in writing that the person does not intend to use or forward the requested records, or the information contained in them, for commercial purposes. "Commercial" is narrowly construed and does not include reporting or gathering news, reporting or gathering information to assist citizen oversight or understanding of the operation or activities of government, or nonprofit educational research.



2. Ohio Rev. Code § 149.43(E)(2) (Continued)

Ohio Rev. Code § 149.43(E)(2) further requires all public offices take certain actions with regard to their public record policy. Public offices must distribute their Public Records Policy to the employee who is the records custodian/manager or otherwise has custody of the records of that office and have that employee acknowledge receipt of the Public Records Policy; create and display in a conspicuous place in all locations where the public office has branch offices a poster describing the public records policy; and, if the public office has a manual or handbook of its general policies and procedures for all employees, include the public records policy in that manual or handbook. A public office also shall have available a copy of its current records retention schedule at a location readily available to the public.

We noted the Coalition did not have a formal public records policy or a records retention schedule.

**Current Status of Matters Reported in our Prior Engagement**

Our prior engagement for years ended June 30, 2018 and 2017 included a matter regarding inadequate support for membership dues collected. This matter was repeated with current year observations.



Keith Faber  
Auditor of State  
Columbus, Ohio

April 5, 2021

# OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE KEITH FABER



**OHIO COALITION FOR EQUITY AND ADEQUACY OF SCHOOL FUNDING**

**MUSKINGUM COUNTY**

**AUDITOR OF STATE OF OHIO CERTIFICATION**

This is a true and correct copy of the report, which is required to be filed pursuant to Section 117.26, Revised Code, and which is filed in the Office of the Ohio Auditor of State in Columbus, Ohio.



**Certified for Release 4/15/2021**

88 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215  
Phone: 614-466-4514 or 800-282-0370

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at  
[www.ohioauditor.gov](http://www.ohioauditor.gov)

# Exhibit 2

From: **Cathy Johnson** <[cj0916@swcsd.us](mailto:cj0916@swcsd.us)>

Date: Fri, Mar 31, 2023 at 1:23 PM

Subject: Re: Public records request

To: Brian Ames <[bmames00@gmail.com](mailto:bmames00@gmail.com)>

Cc: Danielle Devoll <[danielle.devoll@mvesc.org](mailto:danielle.devoll@mvesc.org)>, Jill Ackerman <[jackerman@limacityschoools.org](mailto:jackerman@limacityschoools.org)>, Monte Bainter <[montebainter@lhsd.k12.oh.us](mailto:montebainter@lhsd.k12.oh.us)>, Vaughn Bell <[bellb@wsoh.org](mailto:bellb@wsoh.org)>, Linda Blum <[lblum@northmontschools.net](mailto:lblum@northmontschools.net)>, Eve Bolton <[boltone@cps-k12.org](mailto:boltone@cps-k12.org)>, Eric S. Brown <[ebrown@columbus.k12.oh.us](mailto:ebrown@columbus.k12.oh.us)>, Anthony J. Calderone <[aj.calderone@labrae.school](mailto:aj.calderone@labrae.school)>, Walter Davis <[wdavis@woodridge.k12.oh.us](mailto:wdavis@woodridge.k12.oh.us)>, Polly Taylor-Gerken <[ptaylorgerken@tps.org](mailto:ptaylorgerken@tps.org)>, Dan Heintz <[d\\_heintz@chuh.org](mailto:d_heintz@chuh.org)>, Nneka Slade Jackson <[jackson.nneka@richmondheightsschools.org](mailto:jackson.nneka@richmondheightsschools.org)>, Cathy Johnson <[cathy.johnson@swcsd.us](mailto:cathy.johnson@swcsd.us)>, Lori Snyder-Lowe <[lori.lowe@mvesc.org](mailto:lori.lowe@mvesc.org)>, Craig McKendry <[cmckendry@barbertonschools.org](mailto:cmckendry@barbertonschools.org)>, Joel Parker <[joel@elida.k12.oh.us](mailto:joel@elida.k12.oh.us)>, Beryl Brown Piccolantonio <[piccolantonio@gips.org](mailto:piccolantonio@gips.org)>, Eric Resnick <[resnick\\_e@ccsdistrict.org](mailto:resnick_e@ccsdistrict.org)>, Jocelyn Rhynard <[jrhynard@daytonpublic.com](mailto:jrhynard@daytonpublic.com)>, Ginny Stewart <[gstewart@bgcs.k12.oh.us](mailto:gstewart@bgcs.k12.oh.us)>, Charlie Wilson <[cwilson@wscloud.org](mailto:cwilson@wscloud.org)>

Cathy Johnson, Acting Chair  
Steering Committee OCEASF

Dear Mr. Ames:

As Acting Chair of the Steering Committee of the Ohio Coalition for Equity and Adequacy of School Funding, I am responding on behalf of all members of the Steering Committee to your letters of March 24, 2023, requesting certain documents of the Coalition.

The members of the Steering Committee have never regarded themselves as a public body, and our legal counsel has advised us that there is no legal precedent that would require us to do so. Consequently, we have no records to provide to you in response to your letter.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact our legal counsel, Mark Wallach, at (216) 536-9518.

Very truly yours,

Cathy Johnson

On Fri, Mar 24, 2023 at 1:24 AM Brian Ames <[bmames00@gmail.com](mailto:bmames00@gmail.com)> wrote:

Pursuant to R.C. 149.43, the Public Records Act, I hereby request authentic copies of the following official records of the Ohio Coalition for Equity and Adequacy of School Funding (the "Coalition"):

1. the agreement establishing the Coalition and subsequent amendments thereto.
2. the current bylaws of the Coalition.
3. any subsequent agreements with members admitted to membership subsequently pursuant to the agreement establishing the Coalition.
4. the rule(s) for notification of meetings required by R.C. 121.22(F) in effect for the years 2022 and

2023.

5. the meeting minutes for the years 2022 and 2023.

6. the current records retention schedule.

Responsive records should be emailed to [bmames00@gmail.com](mailto:bmames00@gmail.com)

*Best regards,*

Brian M. Ames

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