

House Finance Primary and Secondary Education Committee
House Bill 64 Testimony

Roni Hayes
Fairland Local School District

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Good morning, Chairman Cupp, Vice Chairman Derickson, Ranking Member Phillips, and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today regarding House Bill (HB) 64. My name is Roni Hayes, Superintendent of the Fairland Local School District in Proctorville, Ohio.

It is our position that the current funding formula established in HB 59 and the proposed changes in HB 64 have not and will not meet the needs of the students in our school district. If our funding continues to be reduced the quality of education that our children and community have become accustomed to and deserve will suffer.

Since the 2005-2006 school year our district has seen significant reductions in our funding. As a result we have diligently made every attempt to control expenditures including but not limited to:

- Retirement incentive in 2011 that save approximately \$750,000 annually.
- Refinanced our bonds
- Retro commissioning of our HVAC systems
- Eliminated multiple positions through attrition

In FY13 our expenditures exceeded our revenue by \$916,831 and again in FY14 our expenditures exceeded our revenue by \$362,116. Although we have reduced costs considerably our five year forecast projects that we will continue to be in deficit spending each year throughout the five year forecast. With respect to the Bridge Formula our district saw a reduction in funding amounting to more than \$440,000 and in FY14 we were on the “guarantee” nearly \$710,000.

The last time our district was on the “guarantee” was in FY09 and our formula ADM was 1635 and in FY14 our formula ADM was 1633 a difference of two. However, in FY09 we were \$94,645 on the “guarantee” but with an ADM of only two less in FY14, we were on the “guarantee” by \$709,900. If you compare total state funding for those two years, in FY09 we received \$9,036,271 and in FY14 we received \$8,320,234. Our ADM was only two less, but our total state funding was \$716,037 less.

Governor Kasich’s administration would like to eliminate the “guarantee” stating that it “short-circuits the formula and continues to direct limited state resources without regard to changing district circumstances.” Even at a one percent reduction of our state and local resources would reduce our aid by another \$246,790 with the proposed budget.

Our school district has historically performed well on state testing receiving Excellent ratings. We contribute that success to having quality teachers and intervention programs. As was mentioned earlier, after the retirement incentive we only replaced two positions. The majority of our intervention positions were eliminated in order to keep class sizes down. However, with the Race to the Top grant we were able to offer intervention once again focusing on our lowest performing areas. For example, fifth grade math was an area of concern. The percentage of students proficient or above has increased from a low of 55% a few years ago to 84% this past year. Only 170 of the 612 public school districts in the state of Ohio (roughly 27%) were proficient.

Our district has continued to do more with less, but our students deserve so much more. As a result of reduced funding and deficit spending we will not longer be able to implement quality programs and services as we have in the past. As a matter of fact we will be forced to reduce positions once again, possibly eliminating some of the most basic offerings.