



Madison Local School District

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Mrs. Angela M. Smith, Superintendent www.madisonschools.net

Senate Finance Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee
Substitute House Bill 49 Testimony
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Chairman Hite, Vice-Chair Sykes and members of the Finance Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee – my name is Angela Smith, and I am Superintendent of the Madison Local School District in Lake County. I started my career 30 years ago in the Akron Public Schools at Akron-Central-Hower. I taught for 9 years in the Mentor Exempted Village School District, and for the past 15 years, I have been an administrator in Madison. I began as a high school assistant principal and for the last two years I have served as superintendent. I have been in Madison through many phases. While our treasurer is here to talk about the dollars, and the impact the projected budget as approved by the house would have on us, I am here to tell our story about people and programs that could be in jeopardy.

I will start with on May 2 our district passed for the first time in 28 years a continuing 4.99 mil levy by a margin of 55.91 % for and 44.09% against. In 2014, the same millage lost with 31.42% for and 68.58% against. On May 2, we celebrated the fact that we made history for our district, and would be able to have a positive balance in our forecast through 2021. This is the first positive balance in all five years of the forecast in years. We were not celebrating increased spending but the fact that we would protect and preserved the learning opportunities that currently exist for our students. This was our moment for our community after years of cutting. Since 2011, with declining local revenue and decrease funding at the state level, we heard the message from our voters to learn to make due. Since that time we cut 82.5 staff members with over 40 being teachers.

These cuts have brought larger class sizes in our elementary buildings and more study halls for our students in middle and high school. But we have done what we had to do, to balance the budget and provide the best education we can for our students with the dollars we have.

When I came to the central office in 2006, we were leaders in the STEM education movement, building a ground-breaking Project Lead the Way program that provided diverse offerings for our students. We offered multiple foreign language programs at the high school and middle school and our students in the middle school had a double period of English Language Arts (ELA). We had two high school art teachers, and a dedicated music director at the middle school. We had three one industrial arts/technology education teachers. Today, we offer only one foreign language at the high school. We have one industrial arts/Stem teacher and our

middle school students have only period of ELA. Our kindergarten classes were at 27 each this year, and we have never been able to afford all-day kindergarten like some of our neighboring districts.

I share this with you because I want you to know that for the \$8527 per pupil that we spend, we provide a no frills education. In the 2016 Cupp Report we are 15th from the bottom out of 608 districts for revenue and 27th from the bottom for expenditures.

We have taken the suggestion of the two state performance audits that were done since 2011. In addition to the reduced classes and larger class sizes, we have utilized shared services in the areas of technology and nutrition services. We have 11 custodians, and three maintenance staff to maintain five buildings with nearly 500,000 feet of square footage. We have raised instructional fees and charged a pay to participate fee for athletics.

While I understand the idea that enrollment should be the driver in the foundation formula, the current rational being used by the budget director fails to take into account that the per-pupil amount has not been adequately adjusted for inflation. That decision is causing our district, as well as many others, to appear to be receiving funds that are not warranted. Losing 5% of our state revenue will have a significant impact on our district that will be discussed in more detail when Mike Vaccariello, our treasurer reviews our financial situation with you.

We have listened to both the public and government officials. For our taxpayers we made reductions. For our government officials, we finally persuaded our community to support us. We have looked for ways to increase revenue through grants and other means. The proposed cuts would be detrimental to the education of our students.

I am asking your committee to reexamine the allocation of already limited dollars and freeze funding levels to that of 2017. This would hold all districts harmless and give us all more time to work together to find a solution to the school funding concerns in Ohio. I thank you for your time this morning.