

Co-chairmen Oelslager and Callender, Vice-chair Scherer, and Ranking Member Cera, and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of substitute House Bill (HB) 305 and Senate Bill (SB) 376, the Fair School Funding Plan. My name is Patrick Schymanski. I am from the NW region and serve on the Elida Local School Board as Legislative Liaison. Please accept this written testimony as my personal opinion on the importance of the Fair School Funding Plan.

Elida Local Schools has struggled, at times with the school funding provided by the State. Since 2004, Elida Local Schools has been flat funded 6 of the last 17 years. In addition, 5 other years, were not only were flat funded but the flat funding was reduced due to economic depression. That leaves 9 of 17 years where our state funding did increase. However, every one of those 9 years, we were a capped district, meaning not once did we receive fully funding from the state formula.

This history does place added pressure on our local tax base. In the 2008 through the 2012 era, Elida Local Schools was on the ballot several times, asking for emergency levy assistance, as our carryover balance hung between 20 to 45 days. The response from our local voters was NO, every time. Their comments to us indicated that they wanted us to get our funding share that they viewed the state owed us, from the state, not from a local revenue source. This attitude is still present today.

The Fair Funding proposal is unique in its approach and clearly defines State funding obligations and local funding obligations. HB 305 and its companion Senate Bill (SB376) meets its name, that is fair funding by balancing state revenue to local ability to pay. In addition, areas like Elida that are property rich and income poor, especially areas like Allen County that contain higher than average elderly folks in the 50+ age group, benefit from this plans analysis of both property tax base and income tax base.

I urge you to approve HB305 this year. I know funding will be difficult, but it is, in my opinion, that funding formulas be developed quickly to support Fair School Funding, even if that means a slight, minor tax increase.

Respectfully,

Patrick Schymanski,  
Legislative Liaison  
Elida Local School Board member