

# Madison Local School District

**Building our community. Creating endless opportunities. Ram Pride!**

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## **Senate Finance Committee HB 33 Testimony**

**Madison Local School District, Richland County  
Rob Peterson, Superintendent**

**May 31, 2023**

Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today on House Bill (HB) 33.

My name is Rob Peterson, and I serve as the Superintendent for the Madison Local School District in Richland County. Madison Local Schools is a geographically diverse district that includes portions of the district that are suburban, rural, and urban, encompassing approximately 50 square miles and serving approximately 2700 students, a high percentage of which are disadvantaged. Our district includes a comprehensive high school where all of our students have access to Career-Technical courses right in our own building.

The Fair School Funding Plan is about *each child* and meeting their needs. It's about our communities, because when our schools are successful, our communities are successful as well.

While the Fair School Funding Plan has been beneficial to our district over the past two years, for the formula to really work, it needs to be fully implemented. On behalf of our students, our district, and our community, I am asking that you move forward with the next steps toward fully implementing the formula.

Our district needs the predictability the formula provides. I ask that you keep the updated FY 2022 base cost inputs included in the version of the bill recently passed by the House. With the current phase-in, my district is only receiving 1/3 of the state's share of the base cost for our students. By continuing the phase-in of the formula with updated base cost inputs, schools in Ohio will have the much-needed stability and predictability to provide more accurate and realistic five-year forecasts and to preserve and protect the educational programming for our students based on this accurate long-term plan.

Madison Local Schools supports the Fair School Funding Plan because it clearly outlines an approach for funding the cost of educating Ohio's children. While some districts may maintain a large carryover, Madison does not. The district has been in need of additional operating funds to maintain our current programming since 2020. However, we did not deem it appropriate to place a levy on the ballot for additional funds during the pandemic. As a result our cash balance has

been on a rapid decline since. We placed an operating levy for new funds on the ballot in May. This was the first request for new operating funds from our community in 26 years as we have tried to remain prudent with our spending over that time. And yet, the levy failed by a margin of 57% to 43%. In order to avoid a negative cash balance at the end of FY 24, it is necessary for the district to cut approximately \$700,000 from its budget prior to the 2023-24 school year. And, if we experience another failed levy attempt in November, the district will be required to make an additional \$2.5-\$3.0 million in cuts prior to the 2024-25 school year. These cuts will be devastating to our students, to our families, and to our community. Many opportunities for our students, both curricular and extra-curricular, will have to be reduced and/or eliminated. While I understand and respect the fact that we have some responsibility locally for funding our schools, the full phase-in of the Fair School Funding Plan and updating the base cost inputs to FY22 levels will lessen the blow of the cuts that will be necessary with another failed levy attempt. Please support the students of the Madison Local School District in doing so.

Chair Dolan and members of the committee, thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Rob Peterson  
Superintendent  
Madison Local School District