



# CHILLICOTHE

CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## Senate Finance Committee

### HB 33 Testimony

Chillicothe City School District, Ross

Claudia Zaler, Treasurer

June 8, 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 Claudia Zaler and I serve as the Treasurer for the Chillicothe City School District in Ross County. The Chillicothe CSD qualifies for 100% Free and Reduced Lunch, a city school located in Appalachia, serving 2700 students, and has a high mobility rate.

The Fair School Funding Plan is a bipartisan solution to school funding that draws upon the expertise of practitioners, as well as other invested parties from within the field of education and our communities. This formula is about *each child* and meeting their needs. The formula is also about our communities, because when our schools thrive, our communities thrive and Ohio thrives.

The Fair School Funding Plan provides an objective, rational, and transparent solution to school funding. However, for the formula to work, it needs to be fully implemented. We are 1/3 of the way there and I am here today to ask on behalf of my students, my district and the community I serve that you move forward with the next steps toward fully implementing the formula enacted in the last biennial budget.

We need the predictability this formula provides. We ask that you keep the updated FY 2022 base cost inputs included in the House-passed version of the bill. Funding in Ohio has been consistently inconsistent. This unpredictability often unduly shifts the burden of funding our schools to the local taxpayer. With the current phase-in, my district is receiving 1/3 of the state's share of the base cost for my district's students. That means that the local taxpayers are expected to pay the remainder of the state share. 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 giving us the ability to implement educational programming for our students based on this accurate long term plan.

Chillicothe CSD supports the Fair School Funding Plan because it clearly outlines an approach for funding the cost of educating Ohio's children. In our district this means ... .

Chillicothe CSD has implemented a STEM based curriculum, STEM facilitators, added Literacy Coaches, funded a STEM preschool facility with ten classrooms, including special education classrooms, Sharp Tutors, Summer School programs, Virtual Learning opportunities, Reading Teachers, Permanent Substitute Teachers, additional Aides, additional teachers for smaller class sizes, Social Worker, School Psychologist, Behavioral Health Specialist, Speech Therapist, Drug Counselor, partnered with additional mental health agencies, and added more Administration supports; all of which will not be able to be maintained after ESSER funding expires in FY24 if we do not have increased funding.

In order to maintain providing current programs and retain staff, we need the predictability for future funding.

Chair Dolan and members of the committee, thank you for your time and attention. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.