

February 24, 2025 The Honorable Sarah Fowler Arthur, Chair House Education Committee 1 Capitol Square Columbus, Ohio 43215

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding the budget appropriation process for the state's funding of public education. I would like to provide this brief written testimony to humbly request that the committee vote to implement the third phase of school funding provided for under the bipartisan Cupp-Patterson Fair School Funding Plan as well as update the formula determining the state's support. This funding model was an important bipartisan accomplishment that addressed long-standing funding challenges facing school districts across the state. This funding is crucial to districts across the state in rural, suburban and urban areas. From New Philadelphia, Dover, Dayton, Akron, Cleveland, Ashtabula and Burton, districts across the state have based their operating plans on this crucial funding from the state.

I recognize that there are spirited disagreements on a number of issues in our state, but the bipartisan nature of this school funding model represents an important milestone when legislators from across the aisle came together to support our schools. There is much opportunity in Ohio, and that opportunity lies with our children. We have a robust educational system in the state that includes private, charter, home and public schooling, and we have the capacity within the state's economy to adequately fund all of these important educational opportunities. However, not all of these opportunities exist for each child in the state, so we have a duty to ensure that all options are fully funded. Our state's constitution, written by the wise founders of our state, includes the provision that education is a right guaranteed to the citizens of the state. That philosophy led to Ohio's rich history as a powerhouse at all levels of education. Personally speaking, my sons attend Akron Public Schools, and I have seen firsthand the amazing work going on in the district. We have faced our share of challenges that will exist even with the current funding model, but I fear the impact a sudden loss of funding would have on our students' educational outcomes.

To conclude, I urge the committee to do two specific things. First, I request that you vote with the bipartisan group of members who have agreed to include the third phase of Cupp-Patterson funding in the current budget appropriation being debated. Second, I urge you to recognize that the state's educational funding formula needs to include both current costs and local capacity. If local capacity is updated without updating costs in the formula, schools will still face real funding cuts to their operating budgets.

Thank you for your time and consideration, as well as the work that you do on behalf of our state's students.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Starvaggi Parent Akron