

FY 2025-2026 Budget Testimony
House Education Committee
February 22, 2025

Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony. My name is Stacie Novelli, and I live in Fairlawn Ohio. I am the parent of a young child in elementary school and active volunteer with the PTA. Education is a passionate issue for me, and I am strongly urging the committee to include the 3rd phase of the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan in the state budget.

As a parent, concerned citizen and advocate for our children's future, I believe public education is the cornerstone of democracy and a critical investment in Ohio's future. Approximately 90% of Ohio's students attend public schools. These institutions are vital for providing quality education, preparing youth to become informed citizens and contributing members of society. Anything less than fully funding public schools would jeopardize educational quality and deepen inequities across communities.

It is alarming that Ohio has already diverted \$1 billion in taxpayer money to private schools through the EdChoice voucher program, which lacks the transparency and accountability required of public schools. This undermines the purpose of public education — to serve all children, regardless of their circumstances. Instead of expanding an uncapped voucher program, Ohio legislators should prioritize fully funding public schools by including the 3rd phase of the Fair School Funding Plan in the budget, ensuring every child in Ohio has access to quality education.

A strong public education system is also essential for a thriving economy. Well-educated individuals are better prepared to drive innovation, meet workforce demands and support local businesses. States with strong public schools attract workers and businesses alike, making them more competitive. By fully funding public education, Ohio can strengthen its economy and build a brighter future for all.

Investing in public education is an investment in Ohio's children and its economic future. It is thus essential that public education remains a top priority for Ohio's leaders and this is reflected in the state budget by including the 3rd phase of the Fair School Funding Plan, ensuring that every child in our state has the opportunity to succeed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Stacie Novelli