

Proponent Testimony for House Bill 96
House Education Committee
February 25, 2025

Char Shryock, Educational Leadership Consultant
Interim Superintendent Bay Village City Schools, retired

Chair Fowler, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking member Robinson, and members of the Education committee of the Ohio House:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Char Shryock and I have spent my life in the service of public education. I speak to you as the daughter and sister of public school educators. And, this is my 37th year as an educator and administrator working within Ohio's preK-12 public education system. Currently I serve as a consultant to 30 districts in Northwest Ohio. This has given me the unique perspective of seeing first hand the positive role that urban, suburban and rural schools are playing in the lives of the children and the adults in each of these communities. As an interim superintendent in 2021, I was able to hear directly from Rep. Patterson and Rep. Cupp as they lead the work of crafting the Fair School Funding bill. It was clear that they were working to provide schools with the funding needed to support a well rounded public education for every child. I am here in support of continuing this funding model and using 2024 values to reflect cost of living increases, not the bill's original 2022 values.

I have worked on countless levy campaigns and I know how important it is for the community to trust in the financial stewardship of the district. Across our state, superintendents, treasurers and community leaders continue to work in partnership to ensure their children all have access to safe buildings, high quality instructional materials, highly qualified educators and the wrap around supports each child needs to be successful and have as many opportunities as possible for a healthy, productive life after graduation. Isn't that what we all want for the children of Ohio? Those stories of individual success are what lie at the heart of public school education. Like the story of one student, I will call him John, who navigated through his PreK-12 education starting with an early identification at the age of 3, with the support of his intervention specialists, job transition coach, classroom teachers, para-professionals, bus drivers and school custodians. He built a set of skills that opened the door for him to be a contributing member of the community after graduation from high school, coming back to work for the district as a proud member of the maintenance team.

I chose to share John's story because I wanted to emphasize the fact that local public school districts, accountable to locally elected boards of education, are the heart of the

communities you represent. These districts depend on consistent funding from the state, along with federal title grants, to provide the children of the community with the best, well rounded education they all deserve. This education shouldn't be solely dependent on the local community's ability to generate funds through levies and property valuation. These same districts are often the largest employer in the area. The small district I led as superintendent had 2000 students and employed 400 people. The buildings serve as storm shelters and community meeting places. Schools provide meals, connections to community resources for families in need, mental health and wellness support, and adult education. I can't imagine living in a community that could not sustain its public school system. When Ohio was added to the Union, it was the first state to receive a land grant to support public education.

Public education is one of the pillars of a stable, cohesive society. Ohio has a long history of strong, locally governed, public schools. Unfortunately, our state also has repeatedly failed to live up to the reasonable expectation that public schools should receive state funding at a level that would provide every student, no matter where they live, with access to a well rounded public school education. The bi-partisan Fair School Funding Bill was the first piece of legislation since the DeRolph decision in 1997 to live up to Ohio's commitment to our children. I urge you to include full funding for the Fair School Funding bill, at 2024 levels, in your budget bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Char Shryock, M.Ed