

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

Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony today. My name is Linda Wagner. I am an Ohio taxpayer. I'm here to urge the committee to include the 3rd phase of the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan in the state budget. Ninety percent of students in Ohio attend our public schools.

Public school funding in Ohio has long suffered from the lack of a constitutional formula. As a bipartisan plan, the Fair School Funding Formula offered an opportunity for schools in Ohio to begin to make progress toward a goal of distributing educational funds in Ohio equitably. Underfunding or not funding the final 2 years of this plan will undermine gains made to date.

Please note that as requested by Governor DeWine, the final 2 years will be calculated on 2022 costs. This makes no sense, as none of us is able to budget based on historical pricing.

Public education is valued by the general public, despite the many attempts by lawmakers to denigrate its value. As an example, when voters in Kentucky, Nebraska, and Colorado were asked about whether public tax money should be used to fund private schools, the answer was a resounding no.<sup>1</sup> In rural Texas, too, representatives recognize the importance of local public schools in their community.<sup>2,3</sup>

Taxpayers recognize the value that a fully funded public school brings to the community. Such a school bring jobs, and for many communities, is the largest employer. Anything that compromises public school funding in Ohio will not be viewed positively by the general public.

I ask you to consider my testimony and choose to include the 3rd phase of the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan in the state budget and recommend that its cost basis be calculated on current costs, not historical ones.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony.

1. Boyd D. Voters soundly reject school voucher initiatives in multiple states. Available at: [Voters soundly reject school voucher initiatives in multiple states - BJC](#).
2. Greene P. Texas and the conservative pushback on school vouchers. Available at: [Texas And The Conservative Pushback On School Vouchers](#).
3. Lopez B, Svitek P. "our public school system is our town": Why this rural Republican is voting against school vouchers. Available at: [Why the vote on school vouchers is different for rural Republicans | The Texas Tribune](#).