

To the Ohio House Education Committee,

As you know, the Fair School Funding plan was a multi-year, bipartisan project that seeks to fulfill the promise of funding public education for the 90% of Ohio children counting on it. **The leadership of Ohio needs to show their commitment to Ohioans by seeing Phase 3 through.** The best path for Ohio families is continuity, not chaos.

Public schools are so much more than just places to learn—they're the heartbeat of our communities. They're where families come together over arts, parent associations, festivals, and, of course, sports—especially those Friday night lights. Public schools create spaces where we connect, build community, and support one another, giving neighborhood families meaningful opportunities to form lasting relationships.

As parents, we chose public education over private schools because we believed our children would benefit from a mix of different backgrounds. Over the years, we've seen how this has shaped them, fostering curiosity over judgment, understanding over fear, and accountability over avoidance. Public schools have also provided them with opportunities to explore and excel in a variety of areas, thanks to the diverse interests of their peers. Our older children, who have friends attending private schools, have repeatedly told us how grateful they are for their public school experiences. Specifically, for this testimony, I asked them to share what they valued from public school; their thoughts:

- Community with my neighbors
- Walking to school with friends
- Opportunities to actually play in multiple sports
- Not being the same as everyone around me
- Being able to approach my faith without being forced into it
- Seeing different perspectives from spending time with different people

**Keeping public education accessible to all children is a solemn commitment we must uphold.**

Investing in public education is an investment in our state's future. A strong education system creates a skilled, innovative workforce that drives growth and sparks new ideas. On the flip side, when schools lack the funding they need, they struggle to update technology, refresh curricula, and provide essential support services. This not only widens the achievement gap but also disproportionately impacts students from disadvantaged backgrounds, leading to long-term consequences such as lower productivity and higher social costs that affect us all.

Simply put, properly funding our public schools is essential for the continued growth of our neighborhoods, towns, cities, and our entire state. Our kids are counting on it—and so are we.

Thank you,  
Sarah Williams