



Ohio House Education Committee



Interested Party Testimony – House Bill 96

Testimony of Christopher Edison

Superintendent, Pymatuning Valley Local School District

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today as an interested party for House Bill 96. My name is Christopher Edison, and I am the proud Superintendent of Pymatuning Valley Local School District, located in Ashtabula County.

Pymatuning Valley serves approximately 1,050 students across 149 square miles in northeast Ohio. Our district is proud of its diversity and resilience, with 76% of our students classified as economically disadvantaged and a growing number requiring specialized services. Despite these challenges, our educators and staff remain steadfast in their commitment to providing a high-quality education to every child.

Our district's successes highlight the dedication of our community and the impact of strategic investments in education:

- **Academic Achievement:** Our students consistently demonstrate growth on state assessments. We have expanded career and technical education opportunities, Advanced Placement courses, and college-credit programs. Additionally, we have successfully implemented the Science of Reading into our Primary and Middle School curriculum, strengthening literacy instruction.
- **Career and Workforce Readiness:** Through partnerships with local businesses and institutions, we offer hands-on learning experiences that prepare students for in-demand careers, ensuring they graduate ready for the workforce or higher education.
- **Eliminating Financial Barriers:** Pymatuning Valley has not imposed student lab, activity, or participation fees, ensuring that all students, regardless of income, have equitable access to extracurricular activities and educational opportunities.
- **Community Collaboration:** Our schools serve as a cornerstone of the community, fostering strong relationships with local stakeholders to enhance educational opportunities and support student success. In partnership with Representative David Thomas, former Ashtabula County Auditor, our school board successfully worked to return property tax dollars to our local taxpayers.
- **Mental Health Support:** Recognizing the importance of student well-being, we have partnered with a local mental health provider to ensure access to critical mental health services. Additionally, our partnership with Parent Coaching offers all parents and guardians free, individualized coaching to strengthen family support systems.

However, the sustainability of these programs is increasingly at risk due to rising operational costs. Inflation has significantly increased expenses for essential resources such as transportation, instructional materials, and staffing. Without a corresponding increase in base funding, our ability to maintain and expand these successful initiatives is severely threatened.

I urge this committee to consider an increase in the base cost to reflect the economic realities our schools face. Investing in public education is not just an investment in our students—it is an investment in the long-term prosperity of our state. We ask for your leadership in ensuring that all students, regardless of their zip code, receive the resources they need to succeed.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any questions you may have.