

Ohio House Education Committee

March 4, 2025

HB 96

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Ann Shroyer. I am a Westerville/Delaware County resident, and parent of a Westerville City Schools elementary student. I also graduated long ago from Wapakoneta City Schools. I'm here to urge the committee to continue phasing the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan into Ohio's budget.

I know I am very lucky to live in a well run school district, where we have received awards from the State Auditor for 7 years for our budget reporting, we have had a solid budget plan, a required reserve, and yet - we are in deficit spending currently thanks to the continued decrease in state funding of our schools, increasing of unfunded mandates, and the inflationary costs that have hit all districts, and the failure of our school levy, mostly thanks to my county of Delaware, the wealthiest County in the state voting down 3 School levies and a fire levy for good measure.

I grew up in a rural part of Ohio where the biggest landowners and thus the biggest hit for property tax mills were farmers, and I was in overcrowded schools for most of my time there because we could not pass a levy with such an unfair Funding model. I went to the school that had served my grandmother - she graduated with Neil Armstrong PARENTS - an ancient building with poor hvac, wildly non-compliant with ADA (even for the early 90s) and a myriad of other issues. I would have hoped that with the much belated Fair Funding Plan being enacted that my son would not have to see the same types of cuts - limited classes, fees for sports and extracurricular that increase wildly. And yet - here we are, because you are looking to go back on a plan to increase the FAIR Funding of our public schools - of which, 90% of our children attend in Ohio. The decrease of funding will hit my community schools hard - and we are lucky to have those aforementioned assets. I cannot imagine what these kinds of cuts will do to the public schools in rural areas, like my hometown of Wapakoneta and other areas where I grew up. Communities rally around their schools - my parents still go to football games. They helped coach and fundraiser for my high school swim team. Business owners support and are supported by these public schools in rural communities. This proposal to decrease state funding will only continue to gut public education in this state, devastating smaller communities, and disincentivizing businesses from locating in a state that is steadily moving towards the bottom in public education.

I ask you to consider my testimony and choose to support the 90% of Ohio students who attend public schools. Please continue phasing the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan into Ohio's budget. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

I will now take any questions you may have.