

March 4th, 2025

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

My name is Hannah Elhard. I grew up in Hocking County and graduated from Logan High School. I attended The Ohio State University here in Columbus. These days, I'm a proud Columbus City Schools elementary school teacher. This is my 11th year teaching, following in the footsteps of my Nana who was a Pickerington Local School District 2nd grade teacher for decades. My life has been shaped by Ohio's public schools.

I'm also a Franklin county home owner and resident and have voted Yes on every school levy since I was 18. I understand that school funding is a community effort. I don't envy the task before you; determining a fair, equitable balanced state budget with unending opinions coming your way and no easy answers. There are many numbers and figures to balance, but please hear me that the amounts you're considering are so much more than numbers to us educators and to the millions of Ohio's children that we serve, 80% of whom attend public schools, to be precise. Those numbers represent tangible resources for our students which make a real difference in their outcomes.

When you look at the ranking of states by their education quality, results vary. Ohio typically falls between 11th and 27th depending on what factors one decides to analyze. Ohio is on the cusp of exciting developments, the arrival of Intel just one example. We as educators will continue to do our part to make Ohio a beacon of high quality education nationwide. To help make Ohio a place where innovators and entrepreneurs want to put down roots, but we also require investment by our elected representatives. High quality education is a team effort.

Making the choice to update and fully fund the Fair School Funding Plan is not only a choice to fund our public schools today, but an investment in the Ohio of tomorrow. Well-funded schools are strong schools. Strong schools build a competent workforce, a well-informed citizenry and safe communities. The decisions you make will ripple out through our schools, our communities and our state for generations to come. As your constituent, thank you for the care taken to come up with a fair and balanced budget. Please, as you do so, prioritize our public schools.

Thank you for listening,
Hannah Elhard