

The Honorable Sarah Fowler Arthur, Chair House Education Committee 1 Capitol Square
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Thank you for providing opportunities to provide written testimony regarding the budget appropriation for the state's funding of public education. This is my second time providing written testimony. I would like to repeat what I requested in my previous testimony, that the committee vote to implement the third phase of school funding provided for under the bipartisan Cupp-Patterson Fair School Funding Plan as well as update the formula determining the state's support. This funding model was an important bipartisan accomplishment that addressed long-standing funding challenges facing school districts across the state in rural, suburban and urban areas.

We have a robust educational system in the state that includes private, charter, home and public schooling, and we have the capacity within the state's economy to adequately fund all of these important educational opportunities. However, not all these opportunities exist for each child, so we have a duty to ensure that all options are fully funded, as guaranteed in our state's constitution. My sons attend Akron Public Schools, of which I am also a graduate, and I have seen firsthand how, despite challenges, the district has run successful and rigorous academic and arts programs, some of which have received the state's highest ratings. There is a strong record of success coming out of Akron Public Schools that has benefited our local community, our state and our country. Even after passing a levy last year to continue to fund crucial operations and make long-overdue improvements to infrastructure, the district may still need to cut staff due to costs outpacing revenue. I fear that if the third, full round of Cupp-Patterson funding is not released and the cost formula not updated, our district will face even more tough choices at the expense of our children's education.

To conclude, I again urge the committee to vote to include the third, full phase of Cupp-Patterson funding in the current budget appropriation being debated and to update the funding formula to include both estimated 2026-27 costs and local capacity. If the local capacity is updated, as it has been, without updating costs in the formula, schools will still face real funding cuts to their operating budgets. This funding is an investment in our state's future. Better public schools lead more people to stay in Ohio post-graduation and attract new citizens to our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration, as well as the work that you do on behalf of our state's students.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Starvaggi Parent Akron