

Interested Party Testimony for House Bill 96
House Education Committee
March 4, 2025

Dr. Miryam Chandler

Chair Fowler, Vice Chair Odioso and members of the 2025 Education Committee of the Ohio House of Representatives:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Miryam Chandler, and I am a parent of three children in the Worthington Schools school district. I am here because I adamantly support the full funding of Ohio's public schools in the upcoming budget bill.

All of my children have attended Worthington Schools since kindergarten; my oldest is now in middle school, while the youngest has just entered kindergarten this year. Their experience at Worthington has been integral to their journey to become compassionate, educated, valued members of society. Their teachers taught them how to read and write – and how to befriend the lonely, and how to work through adversity, and how to advocate for themselves. When one of my children was struggling, it was his teacher who every day reached out and made sure he knew that she appreciated him and valued him, and that his being in her classroom made her day better. When my child was diagnosed with ADHD, the first thing his teacher said was, "How can I help him?" My children have received gifted services, Individualized Education Plan services, and just plain wonderful teaching from the teachers in their schools. I fear that my children and thousands more like them will lose access to these crucial educational services if our public schools are not fully funded in the upcoming state budget.

I worry about my children, and I worry about the children across the state who depend on these important services. We've already seen documented educational losses from the pandemic years; cutting school budgets now means that the most vulnerable children, already so far behind, stand to lose yet more. Students from economically struggling families will suffer; students from low income families who need special services will be hurt most of all. Public schools across Ohio provide educational opportunities, English Language Learning, physical and cognitive therapies, Special Needs services, social-emotional support, reliable meals, transportation, childcare and information access. To eliminate or lessen any of these needed supports irretrievably punishes those our society is most expected to protect – children. All students deserve access to the benefits of public schools.

As you consider your vote on this budget, I ask you to consider the most vulnerable among us. We in Ohio have long been proud of our public schools, and we know the value of an education here. When someone asks my oldest child where he is from, he proudly answers, "Ohio." He's 12, but he's already planning his future – he wants to be a graphic designer. He believes he has a future in this city, and in this state. But if you decrease public school funding, bright, talented students like him – as well as students

who are so very bright and talented when they receive those necessary school supports – will have no way to build a future in this state, and no incentive to stay in a place where education is devalued. I ask that you please consider my testimony, and that you vote to fully fund public schools in Ohio.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Miryam Chandler