



Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice-Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson and members of the House Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on behalf of KIPP Columbus regarding House Bill 96, Ohio's state operating budget. My name is Ciji Pittman and I serve as Superintendent at KIPP Columbus, leading and managing our schools, programs, and overall operations.

KIPP Columbus is a high performing community school that educates just over 2,000 students from kindergarten through 12th grade. We are located in Northeast Columbus and educate a population in which 100% of students qualify for free breakfast and lunch, 95% of students identify as people of color, and about 15% are identified as having special education needs. Since 2020, KIPP Columbus has maintained a 100% graduation rate.

The Governor has proposed a K-12 budget that includes important progress for Ohio's students across a number of programs. We appreciate the governor's long-standing commitment to focusing on education to improve the lives of children and build a competitive workforce. The current version of House Bill 96 provides much needed support in the following areas:

- Increases funding in the charter school facilities program from \$1,000 to \$1,500 per student, which funds nearly half of the remaining need, and provides charter schools with more reliable access to under-utilized public school facilities.
- Codifies the charter equity grant, the charter school facilities fund, and the high-quality charter grant into the funding formula to make charter funding more reliable.
- Increases the allocation for pupil transportation, particularly the investments in special education transportation reimbursements (\$176,897,678 in FY26 and \$194,820,866 in FY27).

In addition to maintaining the above, we respectfully request that the charter equity supplement be raised from \$650 to \$1,000 per student, which will help close the existing funding disparity between charter schools and traditional district schools.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 96. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.