



RICKENBACKER WOODS FOUNDATION

1330 E. Livingston Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43205
Rickenbackerwoods@gmail.com ~ PH.614.427-3201

March 3, 2025

House Education Committee
Ohio House of Representatives

&

House Finance Committee
Ohio House of Representatives

Subject: Urgent Support for Columbus City Schools – Protecting Our Community’s Educational Future

Dear Members of the Ohio House Education and Finance Committees,

On behalf of the Rickenbacker Woods Foundation, I am writing to express deep concern over the proposed state budget adjustments that would result in Columbus City Schools (CCS) losing over \$45 million in critical funding over the next two school years. This decision threatens not only the stability of our school system but also the future of the students and families who rely on these vital resources.

As an organization deeply rooted in education, history, and community development, the Rickenbacker Woods Foundation understands that an investment in education is an investment in the future of Columbus. The proposed funding cuts will significantly impact the students who need the most support—students facing economic hardship, systemic barriers, and a lack of equitable access to resources compared to their peers in wealthier suburban districts.

The Rickenbacker Woods Foundation has seen firsthand how quality education, coupled with community-driven initiatives, can uplift youth and provide them with pathways to success. Through our work with Columbus youth in STEM, history, and workforce development programs, we have partnered with CCS to enhance learning opportunities and equip students with the tools they need to thrive. However, these types of enrichment programs—along with essential services such as Pre-K expansion, school climate and culture initiatives, and family support—are at risk due to the proposed budget cuts.

We urge the Ohio General Assembly to reconsider the current funding formula and recognize the distinct challenges and needs of urban school districts like CCS. Education funding

should be based on the true cost of educating a child in 2025, not outdated formulas that disproportionately disadvantage historically underserved communities.

We stand with Superintendent Dr. Angela Chapman, Columbus City Schools, and the thousands of students, parents, and educators who are advocating for fair and adequate funding. We call upon state legislators to uphold their responsibility to invest in Ohio's future by ensuring that public education remains a top priority.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We welcome the opportunity to engage in further discussion and stand ready to support efforts to protect and enhance public education in Columbus.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Michael D. Aaron', with a stylized, flowing script.

Michael D. Aaron
President & Executive Director
Rickenbacker Woods Foundation
National Historic Landmark & Learning Center
1330 E. Livingston Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43205
Ph. 614.427.3201
E. Rickenbackerwoods@gmail.com