

Testimony in Support of Fair and Adequate Funding for Columbus City Schools

Dear Members of the Ohio House Education Committee,

My name is Kori Fowler, and I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed state budget cuts to Columbus City Schools. As a parent, I am urging you to fully implement and fund the Fair School Funding Plan using the most current cost data available. The future of our students and the quality of education they receive depend on your commitment to a fair and transparent school funding system.

Columbus City Schools (CCS) is the largest school district in Ohio, serving more than 47,000 students. This year alone, our district has welcomed approximately 2,000 additional students, increasing the need for teachers, support staff, academic programs, and mental health services. However, the proposed budget would result in a devastating loss of over \$45 million in state funding over the next two years. This reduction is based on a flawed formula that fails to account for the actual cost of educating a child in today's economic environment.

These budget cuts would force our district to divert funds from the recently passed levy, which was intended to provide critical resources for our students—not to fill funding gaps created by the state. Without adequate funding, essential programs such as early childhood education, career academies, college and career readiness initiatives, and academic interventions are at risk. This is unacceptable. Our students deserve access to a well-rounded, high-quality education that prepares them for success beyond the classroom.

The Fair School Funding Plan was designed to address inequities and ensure that all Ohio students, regardless of zip code, receive the resources they need to thrive. Yet, without full and updated implementation, our district—and others across the state—will continue to struggle with funding shortfalls. Columbus City Schools serves a diverse population, including many students with specialized learning needs and those experiencing poverty. These students require additional resources and support, which this proposed budget fails to adequately provide.

I urge this committee and all Ohio lawmakers to reconsider the proposed budget cuts and commit to fair and adequate funding for Columbus City Schools. Fully implementing the Fair School Funding Plan with accurate, updated cost inputs is not just a necessity—it is an obligation to the students who represent the future of our state.

I stand with Superintendent Angela Chapman, Treasurer Ryan Cook, the Columbus Board of Education, and the thousands of families and educators who are calling for change. Our students' futures are at stake, and we must work together to ensure they have every opportunity to succeed.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to Ohio's children.

Sincerely,

Kori Fowler

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Parent