



Sandusky City Schools

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Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Ohio House Finance Committee
Ohio Statehouse
1 Capitol Square, Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Members of the Ohio House Finance Committee,

On behalf of Sandusky City Schools, I am writing to express our deep concern regarding Governor Mike DeWine's proposed budget for K-12 education. While the budget claims to fully fund the final phase of the school funding formula, it ultimately reduces state aid to traditional public schools, jeopardizing our ability to maintain high-quality education and essential services.

The Legislative Service Commission's analysis reveals a net decrease of \$103.4 million in state funding for traditional public schools over two years. More than half of Ohio's public school districts, including Sandusky City Schools, face funding cuts despite student population growth. These reductions could force difficult choices that directly impact our students' futures.

Sandusky City Schools has a proud tradition of academic excellence. This year, 11 students earned associate degrees through our College Credit Plus (CCP) program before graduating high school, saving families thousands in tuition. Our Career Tech Programs, such as Welding, prepare students for high-paying careers in Ohio. However, without adequate state funding, these transformational opportunities are at risk.

Our expenses continue to rise—negotiated staffing agreements have increased 2-3% annually, electricity costs have surged 34% since 2022, yet the state's share of our funding has decreased by 7.72%. Despite a 30% increase in local home valuations, our property tax revenue only grew by 5.48%. This imbalance places an unsustainable burden on local taxpayers.

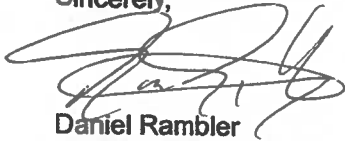
Additionally, the state's growing investment in non-public education creates an inequitable funding structure. While 87% of public school districts see reduced state aid in the first year and 83.1% in the second, private school vouchers and charter schools receive nearly \$500 million in increased funding. While we respect school choice, diverting taxpayer dollars away from traditional public schools undermines the vast majority of Ohio's students.

Ohio's school funding formula must be updated to reflect current economic realities. The reliance on outdated 2022 financial data and the constraints of House Bill 920 unfairly penalize public schools. Rising property values should not automatically reduce state aid when operational costs continue to climb. As state funding declines, districts like Sandusky are forced to seek additional levies, placing an undue financial strain on homeowners and creating frustration within our community.

Public education is the foundation of our state's future. Sandusky City Schools takes pride in responsible financial management and in providing students with top-tier academic and extracurricular opportunities. However, without a fair and sustainable funding model, our ability to serve our students is in jeopardy.

We urge the House Finance Committee to reconsider the current allocations in House Bill 96 and ensure that Ohio's public schools receive the funding necessary to support our students' success. Thank you for your time and attention to this critical matter. I welcome the opportunity to further discuss how these proposed changes will impact Sandusky City Schools and our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Rambler', written over a horizontal line.

Daniel Rambler
Sandusky City Schools, CEO and Superintendent