



Canal Winchester
LOCAL SCHOOLS

Board of Education

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Testimony of Monika C. Talley, Board Member and Parent
Canal Winchester Local Schools
Before the Ohio House Finance Committee

Chairman Brian Stewart, Vice Chair Michael Dovilla, Ranking Member Bride Rose Sweeney and Distinguished Members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Monika Talley and it is with great honor that I have an opportunity to provide you with written testimony on such a critical matter that impacts over 1 million of Ohio's students of varying backgrounds and localities who attend public schools. Education leaders and advocates are depending on academic, special needs, social-emotional, and mental health supports offered in schools to help properly educate the whole child thus contributing to building better and stronger communities that will enhance our workforce. To help preserve and sustain the significant progress and impactful initiatives taking place in my school district as well as in others in and throughout the state, it is crucial that you consider meaningful amendments to HB96 starting with maintaining the commitment lawmakers made when the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan was established as an equitable, objective, needs-based, and transparent funding formula to determine the state's share.

The proposed budget falls short of the funding formula's intent because all parts of the model in current law must be kept together to work in harmony to ensure schools are fairly and fully funded and the Governor's proposal sadly disregards this. While the formula in the proposed budget considers updated inputs for assessed property values and income values, it *does not* consider the actual cost to educate a child, and relies on outdated economic inputs from 2022, which does not account for years of inflation. This imbalance would place a growing financial burden on local taxpayers and does not align with the state's constitutional obligation to fairly and fully fund its share for public education.

As a parent and board member of Canal Winchester Local Schools, I am enthusiastic about the great strides the district has made over the past few years as the district's strategic plan, the "CW Promise" has been materializing and evolving in real-time. Our district's mission is to empower all students for

Empowering All Students for Success

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Vangela Barnes, President

David George, Vice President

Chloe Green, Member

Adam Twiss, Member

Monika Talley, Member

success. The four main priorities in the plan involve meaningful and measurable work in the areas of teaching and learning, safety and wellness, school culture, and operations. Sufficient funding supported the construction expansion of a new wing to provide all-day kindergarten for the first time this school year at our elementary school that services our youngest learners. This enabled the district to focus more on early literacy to help empower students for success. The district is also undertaking steps to improve facilities that will enhance educational, athletic and performing arts experiences for students. Without amendments made to the funding formula proposed in the budget, state funding levels will continue to decline jeopardizing our district's ability to meet the evolving needs of our students hindering our mission of empowerment towards their success. The formula imbalance would create a \$13.7 million shortfall for the district.

Therefore, I urge you to advocate for fairly funded public education by taking legislative action to:

- Update the base cost inputs (use FY24 data inputs for FY26 and FY25 inputs for FY27) and keep enrollment and property valuation adjustments consistent with input updates.
- Complete the Fair School Funding Plan phase-in (at 83% in FY26 and 100% in FY27.)
- Make the Fair School Funding Plan the permanent funding formula for public education in law.
- Fund state mandates at 100%.

Our students, teachers, and communities depend on your support of public education, where 90% of children in Ohio attend school. Please support these amendments because Ohio's future depends on all students being able to receive a high-quality education no matter what background they come from, where they live, or where they choose to attend school.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Monika C. Talley

School Board Member

Canal Winchester Local Schools