



Columbus City Schools

Dr. Angela Chapman, Superintendent/CEO
Ryan Cook, Treasurer/CFO
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superintendent@columbus.k12.oh.us

Mission: Each student is highly educated, prepared for leadership and service, and empowered for success as a citizen in a global community.

House Finance Committee

House Bill 96 Testimony

March 11, 2025

Chair Stewart, Vice Chair Dovilla, Ranking Member Sweeney, our names are Dr. Angela Chapman and Ryan Cook and we serve as Superintendent/CEO and Treasurer/CFO for Columbus City Schools. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on the school funding proposal contained in HB 96.

Columbus City Schools is the state's largest district, serving over 47,000 students, including more than 8,000 students with exceptional needs and over 10,000 students from non-English-speaking households. This year, our district has welcomed 2,000 more students, highlighting the growing demand for resources, teachers, and support services. More students means more need for everything from special education to mental health support, and this makes it all the more crucial that we have a fully funded and fair school funding model to meet those needs.

In our 46 years of combined service to education, we have seen how a high quality public education empowers students to become productive members of their communities. At CCS, we're proud to have trained our teachers in the science of reading and implemented an aligned curriculum, even before it became a state requirement. We're also extremely proud of our students' achievements in career technical education.

As the leaders of CCS, we also manage the Columbus City Career Technical Planning District (CTPD). In the most recent state report card, the Columbus City CTPD earned 5 stars for our impressive 96% four-year graduation rate and 97% post-program success rate. Through career technical education, we are effectively supporting our students and fostering strong connections with the local business community. We are committed to expanding these valuable opportunities to benefit all of our students.



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In collaboration with the community and in response to Ohio's workforce needs, Columbus City Schools is investing in college and career connected learning to better align education with the demands of the modern workforce. Our district is dedicated to providing every student with opportunities that prepare them for success in the real world. As part of our K-12 college and career continuum, we are committed to the Columbus Promise, working with business leaders, higher education institutions, and nonprofit organizations to help build the workforce of tomorrow. Additionally, next fall, we will introduce high school Career Academies, a research-based program designed to equip students with the skills needed to tackle today's challenges and lead in the future.

Career Academies transform high schools into smaller, focused learning communities that are aligned with local industries and in-demand careers. These academies provide high school students with pathways to develop college and career readiness skills. They help students build essential skills such as time management, goal setting, and self-advocacy, while also giving them the chance to explore various career options available in Ohio. With a diverse economy, our students have access to a wide range of careers, from finance and logistics to healthcare and technology. As the largest district in the state, we are committed to ensuring that students have access to these in-demand careers and opportunities. At CCS, our goal is to connect students to their future and show them that their potential starts now, right here in Columbus.

Of course, our students will also continue to have the opportunity to participate in the district's highly successful career technical education programs at our two career centers. These programs often require specific equipment or specially designed spaces and we are grateful to the General Assembly and Governor DeWine for the continued support and investments in CTE equipment grants.

However, we're deeply concerned that the changes we're making and the momentum we've built could be severely impacted by a significant reduction in state funding. According to the governor's proposed state funding formula, **Columbus City Schools is**

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set to lose over \$45 million over the next two school years. This loss is due to the formula's inclusion of increased property tax valuations, but it fails to adjust for inflation for the cost of educating a child in 2025.

Our community strongly supports the work we're doing and the progress we've made at CCS. In fact, we were one of the few communities in the state to pass a levy last school year. The funds from this levy are crucial for supporting services such as expanding career advising, developing and implementing the Career Academies, providing math professional development, offering credit recovery programs, opening new preschool classrooms, funding building substitutes, supporting school counselors, and running summer programs, among others. However, the \$38 million allocated from this levy for general operations would now need to be redirected to cover the \$45 million funding gap. **This means that while our families will continue to pay the levy they voted for, they won't receive all the essential educational services they were promised.**

In our district's most recent five-year forecast, our current state share is approximately 20 percent (Exhibit 1). Yet, under the executive proposal at the end of this biennium, our state share would drop to the 10 percent floor (Exhibit 2). This change would treat our families as if they are as wealthy as those in affluent suburbs—communities with far greater income levels and fewer barriers to student success. This isn't because our students and families have suddenly become wealthy; it is simply the result of a funding formula that only adjusts part of the equation.

On behalf of our 47,000 students, 9,000 staff members, and the committed community we serve, we are asking the House to continue the phase-in of the funding formula using the most up-to-date base cost inputs.

Chair Stewart and members of the committee, thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony during this budget process.



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Exhibit 1

General Fund Revenue State vs Local Share Fiscal Year 2025

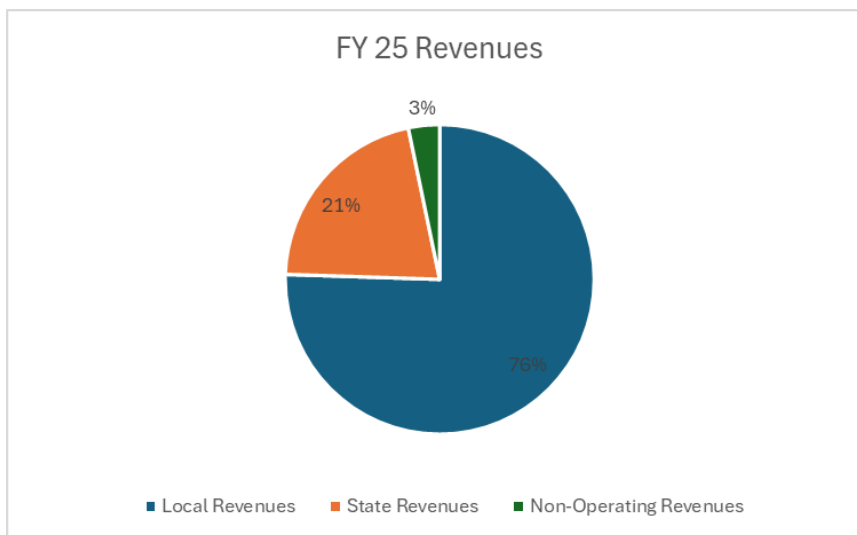


Exhibit 2

District	2022	2023	2024	Estimated State Share Percentage FY25	Estimated State Share Percentage FY26	Estimated State Share Percentage FY27
Columbus City SD	36.77%	29.2%	30.57%	21.7%	15.9%	10.0%

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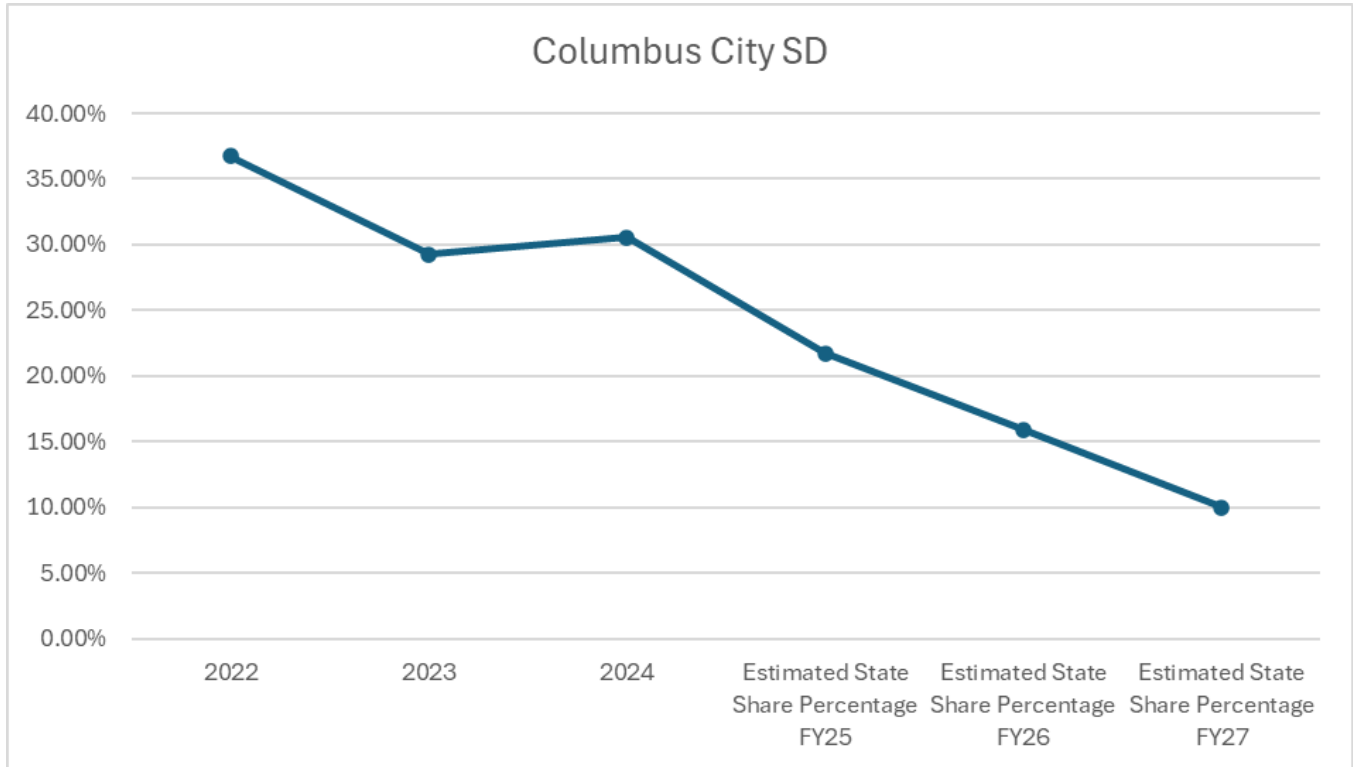
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