



Canal Winchester
LOCAL SCHOOLS

Board of Education

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Testimony of Nick Roberts, Treasurer
Canal Winchester Local School District
Before the Ohio House Finance Committee

Chairman, Vice Chair, Ranking Member, and Members of the House Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on behalf of the Canal Winchester Local School District. My name is Nick Roberts, and I serve as the Treasurer of our district. I appreciate the difficult task before you in shaping the budget for public education, ensuring it serves the needs of students across Ohio. I write to urge the full funding of the Ohio Fair Funding Plan and to highlight the critical need for a sustainable and predictable school funding model.

For the past decade, our district has faced an ever-changing financial landscape, where the rules of school funding shift every two years with the biennium budget. This has forced us to constantly fight to protect our state funding, prevent laws that would reduce our already strained property tax revenue, and comply with an increasing number of state mandates that require significant financial resources. Despite these challenges, we have worked diligently to ensure our students receive the education they deserve while remaining fiscally responsible.

One of the ways we have recently managed to navigate these turbulent financial waters is by implementing the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) to provide free breakfast and lunch to all of our students. This strategic move not only supports our students' well-being but also increased our Economically Disadvantaged funding this year.

Additionally, we proactively constructed a new wing at one of our elementary schools to implement full-day Kindergarten. This decision was essential to offset potential state budget cuts that would have severely impacted our district, as the increased Average Daily Membership (ADM) was necessary to compensate for the lack of base cost adjustments in the current funding structure.

The Fair Funding Formula is designed to be data-driven, utilizing objective measures such as real property valuations and income levels. However, there is one critical flaw in the model: The Base Cost to educate a student is determined subjectively and requires constant advocacy during each budget cycle. If we are truly committed to fair and adequate funding for public education, this figure must be tied to an objective and predictable metric, such as inflation (2-3% annually) or Expenditure Per Pupil.

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Without this adjustment, the formula fails to keep pace with the rising costs of education, which are being driven by inflationary pressures and state-mandated requirements.

Per Pupil Expenditures vs. Base Cost

Fiscal Year	Per Pupil Expenditure*	% Change	Base Cost	% Change
2020	\$12,692	1.76%	\$7,301	0.00%
2021	\$13,387	5.48%	\$7,301	0.00%
2022	\$14,686	9.70%	\$7,301	0.00%
2023	\$15,428	5.05%	\$7,301	0.00%
2024	\$16,311	5.72%	\$8,160	12.00%
2025	Data Not Available		\$8,160	0.00%

* Source: CUPP Report (State Average)

By not adjusting the Base Cost in a systematic manner, the state is effectively shifting an increasing financial burden onto local taxpayers. This occurs because one side of the formula—real estate valuations and income levels—is updated in real time, while the Base Cost remains static until it is revisited in each biennium budget. This imbalance disproportionately impacts districts like ours, where rising property values already lead to increased local contributions. Without a corresponding increase in the Base Cost, local taxpayers are forced to shoulder an ever-growing share of school funding.

We urge the Ohio General Assembly to act and fully fund the Ohio Fair Funding Plan by tying the Base Cost to an objective measure that reflects the true cost of educating a student. This will provide school districts with the stability needed to properly plan for the future, ensure equity across the state, and uphold Ohio's commitment to a fair and adequate education for all students.

On behalf of Canal Winchester Local School District, I appreciate your time and consideration. By taking action now, the General Assembly can ensure that Ohio's students receive the education they deserve without placing undue strain on local taxpayers. The time to act is now.

Sincerely,



Nick Roberts

Treasurer

Canal Winchester Local School District