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March 10, 2025

Finance Committee  
The Ohio House of Representatives  
[OHRfinancecommittee@ohiohouse.gov](mailto:OHRfinancecommittee@ohiohouse.gov)

Re: Governor Mike DeWine's Proposed State Budget

To the members of the House Financial Committee,

I write to you today not only as a life-long resident of Ohio, but also as a mother who has a son within the Columbus City School District who has been diagnosed with an adaptive behavior delay and sensory processing disorder; a community member of an area that is designated low-income; and a deeply concerned citizen of the United States.

I vehemently oppose the Governor's plan to strip funding from the public schools within our state through this proposed budget plan. The combination of the loss of funding from the state along with the additional loss of funding that the state will lose with the potential dismantling of the US Department of Education is a devastating amount as reported by The Dispatch March 6, 2025<sup>1</sup>. Our children, and their future education, will be the ones to suffer the most. Do not approve the proposed state budget.

My son attends Indianola Informal K-8. Indianola is a Title 1 school that provides my son an education in an environment that not only fosters his growth but does so in a way that exemplifies all the qualities that we hold dear in raising our son to be a good citizen of this Earth. I'm speaking about the "Indy 5" which all families learn within the first days of attending. The Indy5 are: Respectful, Responsible, Helpful, Kind and Peaceful. Indianola Informal is not only diverse in its student population, but my son is now learning and excelling in such a way that is drastically different from my own public-school upbringing in rural, Appalachian, Ohio – Coshocton County. He is afforded opportunities to see the world in its entirety and to learn that all that makes us different makes us so much stronger as a community.

My son is unique. I know most parents say that, but in this particular instance, my son is unique: His eustachian tubes do not function properly and so, without the intervention of ear-tubes – which his body seemingly attacks as a foreign object – his hearing is what we call

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dispatch.com/story/news/education/2025/03/06/donald-trump-department-education-money-funding-ohio/81762583007/>

“airplane ears”. He has negative pressure diminishing his hearing. We first found this out through the amazing services offered by the Ohio Help Me Grow program when he was just a year and a half old. After his diagnosis, he had the great opportunity to be a part of the Franklin County Board of DD Early Childhood Education program. Then, once his hearing was restored via placement of ear tubes, and he was beginning to age out of Ohio Help Me Grow, we fought for an IEP within our school district for his adaptive behavior delays and sensory processing disorder. Unfortunately, due to the limited resources and abilities Columbus City Schools has to offer IEPs to all cases of delays, and sensory processing, he was denied due to not having any other significant delay. During the fight for an IEP he was being seen through Nationwide Children’s Hospital Occupational Therapy department – a therapy treatment that is not covered by our health insurance as they did not deem it medically necessary. Due to this, after so many appointments, we could not financially continue such care.

After attending a private preschool that focused on care for children with special needs, when we began searching for a kindergarten for our son to attend we had to think of many factors when it came to what school to pick. We had to be considerate of classroom size, class-type (is a traditional classroom with desks or is it more flexible), what do the schools offer in terms of services (behavioral, sensory processing aids, etc), what is the emphasis / mission of the school, etc. I toured many schools within the Columbus City School District along with a few private, Montessori-based, schools as well. None of them compared to what Indianola Informal, offers.

Due to our location, and our homeschool being Ohio Elementary, you may inquire why we just don’t utilize the School Ed Choice program to get into whatever private school we want. Well, even though we do qualify for the School Ed Choice program and it does help some, the financial hardship that it would create for our family was just not one we could afford if our son was to attend a private school; especially if we would need to outsource resources to get him help for managing his sensory processing and adaptive behavior. I am a stay-at-home mom (to offset the cost of childcare) who works one full-time remote job and a part time job that occasionally has me travel. My husband works full-time. We do not qualify for financial assistance due to our joint income; however, we still live modestly and still feel the strain of the general day-to-day cost of living.

We rely on the quality of care and education that is provided through our public school system for our children. We rely specifically on the extraordinary education that Indianola provides for our son and their ability to aide our son when he is trying to manage sensory processing through the tools and programs that not only Indianola as a school is able to provide, but that his teacher fully understands and is able to aide with.

Now I move on to my next glaring reason why you should not strip the public schools of their funding: The teachers.

Public school teachers are something out of this world. These teachers give everything to the kids they teach. Showing them love, affection, caring and kindness. I have witnessed countless past students and parents come up to my son's teacher and give her a hug and talk about how much they miss being in her class. Our public education teachers spend countless hours with students and parents helping them grow and learn. I have emailed our son's teacher numerous times to give her updates on our son and she in turn updates us. These updates occur even during hours where she isn't to be working. She works with us in helping our son have the best education possible. I have seen her single-handedly help my son calm-down and focus in a way that I never could. She cares about every single child that walks through her door and you can see it without even knowing her.

I know my son is not the only one who benefits from this type of care. A type of care that is not obligated by the teachers, but the teachers provide out of the kindness of their own hearts. The state of Ohio should not punish our public school teachers more by stripping away the funding to their schools making it even harder for them to do their jobs.

To finalize, please think about the thousands of children in not only the city of Columbus, but the state of Ohio, that rely on our public education system. From the family utilizing WIC and SNAP benefits to those of us, like myself, who works every single day just to make ends meet and be able to provide for my family. Thousands of children from all different backgrounds utilize our public school system; we should not risk their educational futures. They all deserve a chance to succeed.

Please oppose the Governor's budget plan. Our children depend on our public education system.

Sincerely,

Lauren K Davis