

Interested Party Testimony for House Bill 96
House Education Committee
March 4, 2025

Ms. Bethany Davey (she/her)

Chair Fowler, Vice Chair Odioso and members of the 2025 Education Committee of the Ohio House of Representatives:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Bethany Davey, and I am a parent of three children in the Columbus City Schools school district. I am here because I adamantly support the full funding of Ohio's public schools in the upcoming budget bill.

Each of our three children have attended Columbus City Schools since kindergarten, and their educational experiences have been integral to their educational, social and emotional growth. None of our children entered school knowing how to read, and each became readers thanks to the expertise and passion of their Columbus City Schools teachers. Their teachers have been some of the first in our children's lives to catch developmental delays and needs for enrichment. Our children's teachers, staff members and administrators have been some of the first to notice and attend to our children's social-emotional needs. It is in large part due to the compassionate, attentive care of Columbus City Schools teachers that our children have received identification and subsequent support for autism, ADHD, dyslexia, a reading-inhibiting optical deficiency and gifted/enrichment needs. All three of our children receive gifted/enrichment services, and one of our children has an Individualized Education Plan. I fear our children will lose access to these necessary educational services, if Ohio public schools are not fully funded in the upcoming budget bill.

It is not only my own children for whom I fear: I am deeply afraid that the proposed educational budget cuts will harm the most vulnerable students and families across the Columbus City Schools school district, and across Ohio. In Columbus City Schools, the majority of students are students of color. Students and families of color will be disproportionately impacted by the proposed cuts, making the budget cuts an issue of racial justice. So too will students and families navigating economic hardship be disproportionately affected by the proposed cuts. Any systemic injustice students and families face increases the ways in which these budget cuts serve to *increase* pre-existing struggle. Public schools across Ohio provide educational opportunities, English Language Learning, physical and cognitive therapies, Special Needs services, social-emotional support, reliable meals, transportation, childcare and information access. To eliminate or

lessen any of these needed supports is inhumane. It is a violence. *All* students deserve access to the benefits of public schools.

Today, I testify as a parent, on behalf of my children, but also on behalf of the children of Columbus City Schools and children across Ohio. I ask that you please consider my testimony, and that you vote to fully fund public schools in Ohio. As you consider, I ask that you keep front of mind the most vulnerable students and families among us, those who stand to lose most profoundly if public school funding is cut. We live in community, responsible to one another, mutually impacted by one another's thriving *and* one another's pain. Public schools in Ohio are well positioned to nurture the thriving of students and families across the state, and I ask that in your considerations, you prioritize this vital, communal responsibility in which we share.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Bethany Davey