

**Proponent Testimony for House Bill 96**  
**House Finance Committee**  
**April 2, 2025**  
**Deirdre O'Neill-Wedig, parent and property taxpayer**

Chair Rep. Stewart, Vice Chair Rep. Dovilla and members of the Finance Committee of the Ohio House of Representatives:

Submitted as an interested party

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Deirdre O'Neill-Wedig.

I am a parent within the Columbus City Schools district, with two school-aged children, Olivia and Lillian, who attend Gables Elementary School. Our son Liam is a 2024 graduate of Centennial High School who attends Columbus State University on the Columbus Promise Scholarship. I am a proud 14-year CCS parent, a school volunteer, a PTA board member, a pro-public school advocate, and a Columbus property owner since 2002.

**I support fully funding Ohio's public schools in the budget bill.** A stronger future for our kids starts with completely adhering to the **Fair School Funding Plan**. This means following the FSFP's formula and calculating the actual cost of educating a child—not the outdated 2022 cost components—so that the State can fulfill its constitutional obligation to our children.

Twenty-five years ago, I moved from SE Ohio to Central Ohio to make a better life for my future children. My husband and I chose to raise our three children in Columbus and in Columbus City Schools because of our dedication to the public education and educators who shaped us our entire lives. Throughout those 25 years, we've invested in three homes in the CCS district because of this dedication. But year-after-year, parents, students, and public educators and staff are asked to do *more and more with less and less*. This includes inadequate buildings, unreliable transportation, limited technology and STEM, position cuts, a reduction in art and gifted programs and so much more. And don't forget over-sized classrooms! The average Gables classroom is 27 students. Remarkably, Olivia's fifth grade class exceeds that average with 30 students for one teacher.

Gables is one of the city's most diverse elementary schools. We're proud to be a Gables Gator and of the friendships and perspectives the school offers our daughters. But they deserve more at Gables (and Ridgeview MS and Centennial)! They deserve a world-class public education so they can pursue their dreams and give back to their communities. But without finishing what the **Fair School Funding Plan** started—without prioritizing public school funding—it is our children, and our future communities, who suffer.

Ninety percent of Ohio students attend public school. And we must do right them! **I urge you to fully fund the Fair School Funding Plan in the 2026-2027 budget** to ensure kids like Olivia and Lillian, have schools with well-paid professional educators, cutting-edge technology, up-to-date curriculum, life-enriching extracurriculars and so much more.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony