

Testimony to the Finance Committee Regarding House Bill 96

Chair Brian Stewart, Vice Chair Dovilla, Ranking Member Sweeney, and Members of the Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you my thoughts regarding House Bill (HB) 96, the biennial budget. My name is David L Green. I have worked in upper management roles for FORTUNE 500 companies for 35 years with several more in independent consulting. I am a community volunteer and Ohio voter. I want to emphasize how crucial funding is for our students' education.

I have had the responsibility to manage a budget of over \$170 million and managed that down to under \$160 Million over 3 years while improving customer service. I understand that controlling spending is vital and difficult work. I also understand that doing so requires understanding your priorities. Educating all our state's children should be one of our state's highest priorities. **An educated population is what makes industry successful and productive.** Our schools are vital in teaching not only math, sciences, and language but also essential soft skills like communication, leadership, and decision-making that employers value. An educated population makes our communities successful and helps raise disadvantaged children out of poverty. I know about this as my wife was one of those children once but through education broke the chain of poverty. I am talking about ALL children not just those that can afford private schools, but disadvantaged children, those without the advantage of stable homes, those with learning and physical disabilities, those with no transportation and those that private schools would not accept.

Our students thrive when they engage in practical, real-world experiences across all grade levels. Engaging in hands-on activities is essential for equipping students for the workforce. These activities enable the practical application of theoretical knowledge, allowing students to cultivate vital soft skills and gain valuable experience necessary for achieving success in their career paths after graduation.

Unfortunately, these advancements are jeopardized by the proposed budget cuts from the Governor. Schools will be forced to make tough choices; if funding decreases at a rate slower than inflation, it will adversely affect the educational growth and opportunities available to our students. The opportunities discussed are vital for elevating our students' learning and fostering their development

I am writing to bring attention to the critical funding challenges facing our district (Tusky Valley). Currently, our district is on the funding guarantee due to a decline in enrollment, and we have experienced increased property valuation because of the Rover pipeline, ***which failed to make full payment for over seven years.*** Consequently, we have not received any additional funding from the guarantee during this time. **OUR GUARANTEED STATUS IS PRIMARILY IS DUE TO INACCURATE VALUATION OF OUR DISTRICT.**

The complexities of school funding vary widely across school districts. My school district situation can be likened to a dual-income household, where one income is fixed due to the guarantee—unchanged for the past seven years—while the other relies solely on property taxes, our only means of combating inflation. If the guaranteed funding for schools experiences a 5% cut in year 26, compounded by another 5% cut in year 27, our district would face a staggering loss of \$750,000. The state share percentage in FY22 was 16.7% and is projected to be 10% in FY26 & FY27 in the Governor's

proposed budget. The State should be providing more financial assistance to our school district, not less. Our state elected officials should not be relying on our community to burden anymore of the funding for our school district through levies.

I am asking you to be bold and courageous in our support for public schools by increasing the budget for every district, rather than lessening it. The lack of state support will cause irrevocable harm to education and to the tax payers. Our students deserve more than classrooms characterized by overcrowding, basic learning methods, and insufficient funding for programs that foster engagement and motivation for success in our students and our workforce.

Thank you for your attention to this crucial matter. This investment is vital not only for our students but also for the future of our workforce.

Sincerely,
David L Green
Ohio Resident and Taxpayer

My 3 requests:

- 1. I request guaranteed schools' remains at the full unreduced 100% it was in 2023. (The guaranteed schools funding would not increase but it would remain the same without any reduction.)**
- 2. Prioritize funding for public education for all students in this budget.**
- 3. I request that HB 96 be amended to use FY 24 data for inputs to the formula -this will decrease the number of schools on the guarantee and balance the formula as it was intended for other school districts**