

**Proponent Testimony for House Bill 96**  
**House Finance Committee**  
**4.3.2025**

**Susan Cavendish, CCS Parent**  
**Columbus Parent Impact Parent Leader**

Chair Brian Stewart, Vice Chair Michael D. Dovilla and members of the Finance committee of the Ohio House of Representatives:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Susan Cavendish. I am a parent in the Columbus City Schools district, my children attend West Broad Elementary School and Highland Elementary School. In my family's west side neighborhood and our neighborhood schools I regularly look for ways to become involved including volunteering at my children's school, and running a parent group.

Early in childhood the importance and merits of public education were instilled in me with a family of public school teachers. We *need* fully funded public schools and there is no question that they should be in the state budget.

Any budget cuts to critically needed programs such as special education, early childhood education school counseling, meals etcetera would directly affect my children and household. One of my children is Autistic and attends the special needs pre-school at Highland elementary. Even though he only started in December of last year he has flourished so immeasurably I do not know where we would be without the program. His vocabulary has exploded. For the very first time when I came to pick my child up he ran to me and exclaimed "Mommy! I missed you". Budgets cuts could mean less teachers, aides, paraprofessionals in an already strained field. There are so many children like my son, there are many parents like me, waiting to hear that first "I miss you" guided with the support and education these staff provide.

My seven and six year old daughters attend West Broad and receive school counseling through the school. After experiencing the loss of multiple family members their grief has been complex and vast. While they receive services outside of the school, in school counseling availability has been invaluable support. It also means they miss less school hours for appointments.

There are far too many examples to list of how budget cuts would hurt my family and other families like ours. Everyday I see children and families of ELL communities, families with disabled children, those in poverty... I see how deeply they are struggling but I see

how much programs within our public schools help them when it can feel like we are drowning.

I am testifying for not only my family but every family for every educator and professional in the public school system who is trying to stay afloat and depends on our state fairly funding public schools.

Please accept and consider my testimony and vote YES for the Fair School Funding Plan.

Thank you,

Susan E. Cavendish