

**Senate Education Committee**  
**House Bill 96**  
**May 5, 2025**

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 96. My name is Rose Ioppolo and I serve as a board member for the Mentor Exempted Village School District in Lake County.

I am writing to express the need to fully phase in the Fair School Funding Plan over six years, including updating the base cost inputs and preserving the guarantee until full phase-in is complete.

I also have concerns regarding the 30% cap being placed on K-12 school funding in Ohio, as well as the timing of anticipated reductions to the Fair School Funding Plan. While I understand the intent behind establishing financial limits, I worry that such measures may lead to unintended consequences, ultimately resulting in more frivolous spending rather than meaningful financial stewardship. With this cap essentially returning unallocated funds to taxpayers, I fear that schools may simply redirect these resources toward non-essential expenditures, avoiding necessary long-term planning. Without provisions to earmark funds for permanent improvements and maintenance and future revenue needs, schools may find themselves in a position where they must continuously increase expenditures, placing additional levies on the ballot. This cycle could lead to voter fatigue, making it increasingly difficult to secure the funding needed for essential educational priorities.

Additionally, the timing of reductions to the Fair School Funding Plan presents an immediate challenge. Implementing substantial funding cuts so close to the start of the school year could leave schools scrambling to adjust their budgets and reconsider financial commitments they had already anticipated. Significant funding changes should be planned with a future implementation date to provide districts with sufficient time to reevaluate their financial strategies without compromising essential programs and services.

I appreciate that the State has been more than generous with public school funding. I also agree we need immediate property tax relief. However, I fear the 30% cap, as written-without provisions-may create an 'us vs. them' dynamic between taxpayers and our district. Even without changes in funding, my district is in a tough spot after a failed levy in

2023 and will be relying heavily on taxpayer support for an upcoming levy in the very near future. It is critical any funding cap percentage be increased and budget reductions include clear provisions for future expenditures, ensuring that schools remain fully funded and able to support lasting improvements.

Finally, although I'm a board member of a public school district and a mother of two public school graduates and two current public school students, I strongly support school choice and thank you for continuing to support school vouchers. I believe every student should have the opportunity to attend the school that best fits their individual needs to achieve the best possible outcomes. I also believe that vouchers will drive public school districts to be more competitive and provide an educational experience similar to that of private schools.

Thank you for your continued commitment to students. Your support helps ensure that every child has access to the resources, opportunities, and education they need to succeed. I appreciate all you do to prioritize the future of our communities.

Respectfully submitted,

**Rose Ioppolo**

**Board Member**

Mentor Exempted Village School District

Lake County, Ohio