

Senate Education Committee
House Bill 96
May 11, 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 Maggie Cook, and I am a proud K-12 graduate of Ohio public schools. I am elected to the Board of Education for the Mentor Exempted Village School District in Lake County. a speech-language-pathologist for Chardon Local Schools, a graduate of public schools, and a mother of both a public school student and a public school graduate.

Today, I write to express my strong opposition to Ohio House Bill 96, a bill that threatens the future of our children's education and the integrity of our public school system. Ohio House Bill 96 will have immediate and severe consequences for the students and residents across Ohio. The proposed 30% cap on year-end general fund cash balances relative to prior-year expenditures will penalize districts for responsible long-term planning and create a system that forces districts to increase the frequency of levies to sustain operations. This plan will undermine instructional programming including class sizes, college preparedness, workforce development, and intervention programs for struggling learners.

I support the full implementation and funding of the Fair School Funding Plan (FSFP). This plan was created through a bipartisan effort with input from educators, superintendents, treasurers, and policy experts across the state. The Fair School Funding Plan is student-centered, transparent, and provides a predictable model that helps districts with long term planning. Nearly 90% of Ohio's school aged children attend public school, as our leaders, we elected you and rely on you to provide funding that evolves and changes with economic needs. As such I urge the Senate to:

- Implement the Fair School Funding Plan with updated base cost inputs that acknowledge rising costs
- Preserve the existing guarantee structures until the full phase-in is complete
- Remove the 30% case balance provision from House Bill 96

Chair Brenner and members of the committee, I appreciate your time and consideration with properly funding the education of the students of Ohio.

Respectfully submitted,

Maggie Cook
9592 Hoose Road
Mentor, Ohio 44060