

# Tecumseh Local Schools

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*Learning for All ~ Whatever it Takes!*

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## **Senate Education Committee House Bill 96 May 14, 2025**

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on House Bill 96. My name is Paula Crew, and I serve as the Superintendent of Tecumseh Local Schools in Clark County.

The Tecumseh Local School District is a rural district in western Clark County covering approximately 50 square miles, serving over 2,600 students.

I appreciate the work of this committee and the General Assembly in supporting Ohio's public schools, and I respectfully offer the following comments on several provisions in House Bill 96.

I am here today to express my concern regarding a provision in HB 96, the current biennial budget bill. Specifically, I would like to address the proposed requirement for local county budget commissions to reduce property taxes when a school district's carryover exceeds 30%. This provision would have a significant and negative impact on Tecumseh Local Schools.

Over the past twenty years, Tecumseh Local Schools has worked diligently and responsibly to manage its finances. It has made strategic reductions to administrative, teaching, and staff positions, eliminated valuable student programs, and implemented cost-containment measures across the board. Tecumseh Local Schools has reduced nearly \$8 million from its \$32 million annual budget. That is a reduction of 25% of our budget.

Tecumseh Local Schools has used its ESSER/COVID relief funds prudently, applying them to offset salary costs and build a sustainable carryover to help sustain the district for the next couple of years. This disciplined financial approach has enabled Tecumseh Local Schools to remain stable despite the fact that it has not received any new operating funds since 1995, nearly thirty years, despite twelve attempts at the ballot box. Consequently, Tecumseh Local Schools cannot depend on the increase of local revenue, as evident by the thirty-year gap since we received new money.

While our district's current carryover is above the 30% threshold mentioned in HB 96, these funds are not excessive. This carryover was obtained through budget cuts, reduction in staff, elimination of student programs, combined with the strategic spending of our COVID funding, in order to have a lifeline essential to maintaining operations and educational quality for the next few years. If you take away our carryover, you take away our financial lifeline.

This component of HB 96 penalizes districts that have been responsible stewards of public funds. Instead of being recognized for sound financial management, we are at risk of losing crucial revenue that supports our students and staff.

I respectfully urge you to advocate on behalf of districts like Tecumseh Local Schools. We need your leadership to help ensure that careful planning is not punished, but rather upheld as an example of responsible governance.

Chair Brenner and members of the committee, thank you for your time and attention. I appreciate your consideration of these crucial next steps in supporting Ohio's educational excellence. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.