

Good afternoon Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram , and the Senate Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony as a proponent of fully funding the Fair School Funding Formula in this year's biennial budget. I am Dr. David Glasner, Superintendent of the Shaker Heights City School District.

The proposed budgets coming from the governor and from the House would be adverse for many and catastrophic for some public school districts in Ohio. That's why I join a chorus of superintendents from across our state in urging the Senate to fully fund the Fair School Funding Formula – our best chance of maintaining and improving programs and services for every Ohio child. This includes accounting for inflation and using the 2025-2026 cost inputs. Without doing so, you are shifting additional burden to local taxpayers, who already face rising taxes and other inflationary costs.

In Shaker Heights, we have been responsible stewards of our community's resources. We have not had to be on the ballot for a full operating levy in over 10 years. We have allocated resources strategically to meet student needs without overspending. Our students' positive academic outcomes are evidence of the effective use of community and government resources.

The budget proposals currently being considered would require the school district to go to local taxpayers earlier, more often and for more money. Under Governor DeWine's proposed budget, for example, we are projected to see state funding cuts of over 4 percent in both the first and second years of implementation. We are already experiencing deficit spending and our cash reserves are projected to run out within the next few years.

My colleagues and I have grave concerns as well about the proposed 30 percent carryover cap on school reserves. This cap could have devastating effects on how public schools in Ohio operate.

While we agree that reducing stress on the local taxpayer is a good thing, the mechanism being proposed is faulty. It takes the local control and understanding of our individual school district budgets out of our control and away from duly elected boards of education.

This proposed cap would force 481 of 611 Ohio school districts to spend down \$4.25 billion in reserves or provide a one-time tax rate reduction. This arbitrary cap on cash reserves is harmful to public schools, ineffective as property tax relief, and must be removed.

In Shaker Heights, our motto is: “A community is known by the schools it keeps.” Like communities all across Ohio, the Shaker Heights City School District is a cornerstone of this region. Please keep it that way by sustaining the state’s share of funding for public schools.

Thank you.