

Testimony of Angela Houston – Cincinnati Public Schools Parent and Educator
Testimony to Senate Education Committee
House Bill 96 Interested Party
May 14, 2025

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee. My name is Angela Houston. I am a graduate of Cincinnati Public Schools, a current CPS teacher, and a proud parent of two boys who attend CPS schools—Withrow and Hughes.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today and for the work that goes into developing a budget for the state. I understand that sometimes tough decisions need to be made in this process. But what I don't understand is why we have to ask public officials, who are elected by the public, to use public dollars to fund public schools.

I live, work, and serve in my community every single day. I believe our schools must be fully and fairly funded in this year's budget bill. Our state has a moral and legal obligation to fund public schools equitably, and yet, year after year, our students are shortchanged.

As a parent, I see the impact of underfunding firsthand. My sons are taking College Credit Plus classes to prepare them for post-secondary education, but they balance out their academic work by playing sports. Athletics keep them focused, disciplined, and motivated to succeed. But now, because of budget gaps, families like mine are being told we may have to "pay to play." For households already qualifying for free or reduced lunch, that's just not feasible.

I've been an educator and instructional leaders for the past 25 years. And as a teacher, I'm constantly using my own money to purchase classroom supplies. If I don't do it, my students go without. We're talking about basic things—pencils, paper, hygiene items—being covered by educators' paychecks. It's not sustainable. It's not fair. And it's not right.

Families like mine—who pay our taxes just like everyone else—are tired of being the first to feel the cuts. In neighborhoods across Cincinnati, the effects are everywhere: crowded classrooms, limited extracurriculars, outdated materials, and not nearly enough school counselors or intervention specialists to support the real needs of our kids. When schools are underfunded, we lose opportunities, and communities like ours are left behind. That's not fair. That's systemic neglect and generational theft.

CPS should be receiving \$20 million in funding through the Fair School Funding Plan. As it stands now, the budget only allocates \$1 million. Meanwhile, we're watching money get funneled into sports stadiums in Cleveland while our students go without the basics. That's unacceptable.

Ohio's Constitution mandates that our state adequately fund public education. It's time to be accountable to that promise. I urge you to implement the Fair School Funding Plan in full and fund our public schools—immediately. Our students, our teachers, and our communities are depending on you.

Thank you for allowing me to be here today and I'm happy to answer any questions and share insight as a mother, educator, and community member from Cincinnati Public Schools.