



*"Today's Learners, Tomorrow's Leaders"*

## Senate Finance Committee

### House Bill 96

May 27, 2025

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on House Bill (HB) 96. My name is John Rose, and I serve as the Treasurer/CFO of the Union-Scioto Local School District in Ross County.

The Union-Scioto Local Schools is a rural district serving approximately 1,970 students and covering sixty-three square miles.

I want to thank this Committee for your service to Ohio and for supporting Ohio's public schools, and I respectfully offer the following comments on several provisions in House Bill 96.

### **Fair School Funding Plan: Preserve the Phase-In and Update Base Cost Inputs**

Like many of my colleagues across the state, I remain strongly committed to the Fair School Funding Plan (FSFP). It is a student-centered, transparent, and predictable model that reflects the actual cost of educating students in our communities.

Replacing the FSFP phase-in with temporary "bridge funding" moves away from this progress and reintroduces uncertainty into a system we've worked hard to stabilize.

We urge the Senate to:

- Remove temporary "bridge funding" and maintain the phase-in as proposed by Governor DeWine.
- Update the base cost inputs to reflect current costs, such as staffing, class sizes, and services; and
- Maintain guarantees until full implementation of the FSFP is complete, including updated categorical funding.

Without updated base costs, districts like mine risk being penalized even as other formula inputs—such as property valuations or income data—are refreshed. This creates structural imbalance and shifts more of the funding burden onto local taxpayers.

As an example of this according to the Ohio Department of Education (DEW), 2022 average per pupil costs statewide were \$14,686, In 2024 this amount was \$16,310 or a 11.1% increase. This is particularly important since the current budget proposal updates local capacity (a district's ability to pay) based on current income and property value calculations.

I have modeled the formula with costs at 2022 levels and updated to 2024 levels. For Union-Scioto this would mean approximately \$500 thousand in revenue annually. Again, this is just from updating the true cost to educating students. This funding represents a difference of 5-6 teachers.

Thank you for your time and attention to the important work of supporting our students!