

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of fully funding the Fair School Funding Plan and increasing state investment in special education.

My name is Jane McFeely, and I am a proud resident of the Westerville City Schools district. I'm here today because I believe every child—regardless of their zip code, background, or abilities—deserves access to a high-quality education. Westerville City Schools, like many districts across Ohio, is working hard every day to provide that education, but we can't do it alone. State support is critical to ensuring all our students succeed.

The Fair School Funding Plan represents a long-overdue commitment to a more equitable, transparent, and student-centered approach to funding Ohio's public schools. It is based on what it actually costs to educate a child and adjusts for each community's ability to contribute. Westerville stands to benefit from a fully phased-in plan that reflects both our needs and our local taxpayers' capacity. Without full funding, our district is left to make difficult choices that may limit student opportunities, increase class sizes, and under-resource essential services.

In particular, I want to emphasize the urgent need to increase funding for special education. Westerville serves a diverse student population, including many children with disabilities who require specialized instruction, support, and services to reach their potential. These supports are not optional—they are legally and morally required. Yet, state funding for special education has lagged far behind actual costs for years, leaving districts to backfill the gap, often at the expense of other critical programs. That is not sustainable.

Fully funding the Fair School Funding Plan—and increasing special education funding within it—means investing in our future workforce, our communities, and our shared prosperity. It means honoring the promise of a free, appropriate public education for every child in Ohio.

On behalf of our students, educators, and families in Westerville, I urge you to prioritize education funding in this budget cycle. Please do not allow another generation of students to wait for the resources they need to thrive.

Thank you for your time and your service to the people of Ohio.

Sincerely,
Jane McFeely
3754 Tolland Dr, Grove City OH, 43123
Constituent, Westerville City Schools