

Testimony for House Bill 96
Senate Finance Committee
May 27, 2025
Abby Buckerfield, Parent

Chair Jerry Cirino, Vice Chair Brian Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Finance Committee of the Ohio Senate:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Abby Buckerfield. I am the proud parent of 3 graduates from Ohio's public high schools, 2 of which have chosen the family business of being educators, an Intervention Specialist with 28 years of classroom and educational leadership experience, and advocate for public education.

I am writing in support of fully funding Ohio's public schools in the budget bills by fully phasing in the formula with updated cost inputs. In order for this formula to truly make a difference for Ohio's public school districts, the 30% cash balance threshold with "clawback" must be eliminated. Otherwise, there is really no increase in state revenue for many of Ohio's school districts, further placing additional burden on communities. Specifically, in my district of residence, Delaware City Schools, the district would lose about \$6 million in FY26 alone due to this provision. These dollars have already been approved by taxpayers and are needed in future years to remain in good fiscal standing, and to not have to return to voters for operating funds. To summarize, I am asking for this committee to do the following with this budget bill.

- Eliminate the cap on the savings threshold to allow for local school boards to continue to manage their finances based on the needs of their individual and unique community and levy cycles
- Fully phase in the Fair School Funding Plan with updated cost inputs

The opportunities my children had access to in our public schools enabled them to develop academically, socially, and emotionally into the well-rounded individuals that they are today. They each had their own experience of participating in school plays, orchestra, athletics, yearbook, and most recently my youngest being a finalist in the NASA App Development Challenge in her Computer Science Program. This wide range of opportunities are invaluable to the development of the whole-child, allowing students to succeed inside and outside the classroom, ready for a successful future after high school.

After college, my husband and I chose to live in the city of Delaware where he grew up to raise our family. He valued the education he received growing up. We love the community, and we value the education our children have received. We would like to see the families stay in our

community and their children receive the same high quality education our children have received, which is dependent on the state stepping up and paying their fair share, supporting public schools.

I ask that you please consider my testimony and vote to fund the Fair School Funding Plan, with updated cost inputs, eliminating the cash threshold balance and clawback. Please consider the millions of students who attend and depend upon their public schools. I appreciate this opportunity to submit testimony and your time.

Abby Buckerfield, Parent

Delaware City Schools