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The Honorable Jerry C. Cirino
Senator, Ohio's 18th Senate District
1 Capitol Square, Room 127
Columbus, OH 43215

Chairman Cirino,

On behalf of the Fairland Local School District, I appreciate the opportunity to share our perspective regarding House Bill 96 as it is currently written. While there are several commendable provisions in the bill that support Ohio's students and public schools, we have significant concerns about its potential implications for school funding—particularly with respect to the future of the FSF and the proposed 30% cap on carry-over balances.

First and foremost, Ohio's K–12 public education system is built upon the strength of locally elected school boards—men and women who are small business owners, farmers, healthcare professionals, and lifelong community members. These individuals know the unique challenges and needs of their school districts and are best positioned to make responsible financial decisions on behalf of their communities. A one-size-fits-all approach rarely leads to optimal outcomes in education policy, and the proposed carry-over balance cap represents a troubling step away from local control.

If the Ohio Senate chooses to maintain a policy regarding carry-over balances, we respectfully request that the 30% cap be removed, and that local boards of education be empowered to establish their own carry-over fund policies. Although our carry over fund is only 23% due to the effect that a lack of funding has had on our district over the years, taking away the ability to save and plan for future needs would make it almost impossible to manage. Having detrimental consequences for public school students in Ohio. These policies should include reasonable minimum and maximum thresholds tailored to the specific fiscal conditions and long-term planning needs of each district.

Additionally, we urge the Senate to remain committed to the core principles of the FSF. Even in circumstances where full funding of the inputs may not be immediately possible, the structure of FSF remains the most equitable and transparent method for determining the true cost of educating Ohio's students. Its design acknowledges the diverse needs of districts across the state and we believe that abandoning this model would be a significant step backward.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of these concerns as the Senate continues its work on Ohio's operating budget for the upcoming biennium. We remain hopeful for legislation that supports educational excellence while respecting the financial stewardship of local communities.

Sincerely,


Roni Hayes, Superintendent


Wendy McGoon, Treasurer