

**Written Testimony on House Bill 96
Submitted to the Ohio Senate Finance Committee
By Lisa Galek, School Board Member
Brecksville-Broadview Heights City School District
May 23, 2025**

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and Honorable Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill 96. My name is Lisa Galek, and I proudly serve on the Board of Education for the Brecksville-Broadview Heights City School District in Cuyahoga County. Our district educates approximately 3,700 students from preschool through 12th grade, serving the communities of Brecksville, most of Broadview Heights, and a portion of North Royalton.

Support the Fair School Funding Plan

I respectfully urge you to continue supporting and fully funding the Fair School Funding Plan, which was proposed by Governor DeWine. We are proud to provide a high-quality public education in our community. Maintaining adequate and equitable state funding is essential to preserving educational excellence and opportunity for all students.

Adequately supporting the Fair School Funding Plan will also require updating the base cost calculations to reflect the actual, current costs of educating students. Without these updates, the formula becomes outdated and misaligned with the financial realities schools face today, undermining the plan's long-term effectiveness and fairness.

Oppose the Proposed Cash Balance Cap

House Bill 96 also includes a proposed 30% cap on district carryover balances. In our district, these balances are not excess funds but a vital component of responsible financial planning. They allow us to:

- Navigate levy cycles with care and consistency
- Address facility needs
- Maintain our excellent bond rating
- Prepare for unexpected expenses or emergencies

Imposing a cap would force districts like ours to pursue smaller, more frequent levies—creating instability for schools and frustration for voters. Ironically, a provision intended to offer property tax relief could end up increasing the frequency of tax measures on the ballot.

This proposed change is significant and deserves far more thoughtful analysis before being enacted into law.

Address the State-Local Funding Disparity

Currently, the state covers only about 17% of the cost of educating students in Brecksville-Broadview Heights, leaving our local taxpayers responsible for the remaining 83%. This creates an unsustainable burden on homeowners and businesses. We need the state to be a stronger, more consistent funding partner to prevent the continued shift of financial pressure onto our local communities.

I urge you to oppose the provisions in House Bill 96 that would weaken the Fair School Funding Plan and hinder responsible fiscal planning. Please support full implementation of the Fair School Funding, including updated base cost inputs, and reject the proposed cash balance cap.

Thank you for your commitment to public education and for your thoughtful consideration of these crucial issues impacting the students and families of the Brecksville-Broadview Heights City School District.

Sincerely,

Lisa Galek
School Board Member
Brecksville-Broadview Heights City School District