

Interested Party Testimony for HB 96
Senate Finance Committee
Wednesday, May 28, 2025

Allison Paetz, Teacher
Rocky River City Schools

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, and members of the Finance Committee of the Ohio Senate:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Allison Paetz. I am a teacher in the Rocky River City School District. I am here to express my concern about the proposed Biennial Budget. I am in support of fully funding Ohio's public schools in the budget bill.

I am writing to advocate for an equitable school funding system that supports all Ohio students and does not pit school districts against one another in a zero-sum funding model. I express my strong support for the continued implementation and full funding of the FSFP including the use of updated, research-based cost inputs that reflect current economic conditions and student needs. I urge the Ohio General Assembly to eliminate the 30% cap on cash reserves and carryover balances and ensure that the budget supports the long-term financial stability and educational needs of Ohio's public schools. I call upon the Ohio General Assembly to uphold their commitment to fair and adequate school funding by ensuring that future biennial budgets continue fully funding the FSFP and updating cost calculations to reflect the actual cost of educating Ohio's students. I strongly oppose the carryover provision in the proposed Ohio biennial budget and I urge you to reject any proposals to cut funding from school districts currently receiving funding guarantees as such actions would create financial instability and negatively impact students and communities.

I serve the teachers in our district as president of the Rocky River Teachers Association. If the Ohio General Assembly fails to follow through on the promises of the Fair School Funding Plan, this will impact our district's ability to appropriately plan for long-term funding of the district, which harms both students and faculty. Underfunded school districts face shortages of textbooks, technology, and supplies, harming educational quality. They may also be forced to cut co- and extracurricular activities vital for student development and community. As a music educator, I have seen firsthand the extraordinary impacts that appropriately funded arts education can have on students' lives and well-being. Music education at all age levels helps students access and express their emotions, form meaningful bonds with their peers, and learn to work collaboratively towards a shared artistic goal.

As a teacher, I ask that you please pursue solutions that deliver tax relief without disrupting the predictability and stability of local property tax revenues for school districts.

Sincerely,
Allison Paetz, PhD