



Northern Local Schools

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The Honorable Jerry C. Cirino
Senator, Ohio's 18th Senate District
1 Capitol Square, Room 127
Columbus, OH 43215
May 23, 2025

Chairman Cirino-

On behalf of Northern Local School District, I appreciate the opportunity to share a few considerations regarding House Bill 96 as currently proposed. While we recognize that the bill contains many positive provisions that will support both Ohio's students and public schools, we have serious concerns about the potential impact it could have on school funding—particularly regarding the future of the Fair School Funding Plan and the proposed 30% cap on carry-over balances.

At Northern Local, like many school districts across Ohio, our educational system is guided by locally-elected boards of education made up of individuals who are deeply rooted in our communities—farmers, small business owners, healthcare professionals, and lifelong residents. These board members have firsthand knowledge of our district's unique needs and challenges and are best positioned to make sound financial decisions that support student success.

Unfortunately, a statewide, one-size-fits-all policy such as the proposed cap on carry-over balances undermines this local control. While we understand the importance of fiscal responsibility, imposing a blanket cap across all districts ignores the wide variance in community needs, funding cycles, and financial planning strategies.

If the Ohio Senate is determined to include a policy on carry-over balances, we respectfully request that the 30% cap be removed and instead, each district be empowered to establish its own carry-over balance policy, with locally determined minimum and maximum thresholds. This approach would maintain accountability while preserving the local autonomy that is essential to our district's financial stability.

Furthermore, we strongly encourage the continued support of the Fair School Funding Plan. Even if full funding of all inputs cannot be achieved immediately, the framework and principles of FSF represent the most effective and equitable method for determining the true cost of educating Ohio's students. It is essential that this plan be upheld and further developed, rather than diminished or replaced.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of these concerns as you work to develop Ohio's operating budget for the upcoming biennium. We are committed to working collaboratively to ensure the best outcomes for all Ohio students.

Sincerely,



Angela Gussler
Superintendent
Northern Local School District