



# HANCOCK COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER

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May 23, 2025

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*Coordinator*

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 Hancock County Educational Service Center (HCESSC), it is my pleasure to provide a few items for your consideration regarding House Bill 96 as it is currently written. While there are certainly many provisions of the bill that will serve both Ohio's kids and the diverse needs of the public schools and communities we serve, we are significantly concerned about the implications that the bill will have on school funding; particularly relating to the future of Fair School Funding as well as the proposed cap of 30% on carry-over balances.

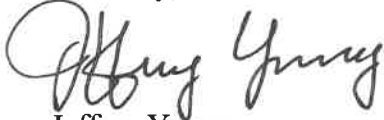
First and foremost, Ohio's K-12 education structure relies on locally-elected school boards whose members are farmers, small business owners, nurses, and residents from dozens of other backgrounds and who have often lived for decades in the school community. They are best-equipped to make decisions impacting the financial position of local school districts. As an Educational Service Center (ESC), we work directly with these boards and their superintendents across Hancock County, providing essential support and understanding their varied fiscal landscapes. These elected officials have historically been conservative in their spending, and this, coupled with the influx of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding, has led to increased cash balances. Generally, a "one-size fits all" change in education funding and regulations is often not met with the best outcomes. However, the currently proposed carry-over balance cap removes this local control from every community in Ohio. If the Ohio Senate is determined to retain a carry-over balance policy, we ask that the cap be removed and that each district be required to establish their own policy for carry-over balances that establish both minimum and maximum thresholds.

Additionally, we ask that the Senate endeavor to preserve the principles embodied in the Fair School Funding plan even if inputs cannot be fully funded. FSF is currently the most effective and efficient way for the state to determine the costs to educate students across Ohio. For the schools in Hancock County, consistent and predictable funding through FSF is critical to our ability as an ESC to deliver high-quality, cost-effective curriculum support, professional development, and student services that benefit all our member districts, particularly in a rural county like ours.

**"Meeting Student Needs Through Cooperative Efforts"**

Thank you for your consideration of these factors while developing Ohio's operating budget for the coming biennium.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jeffrey Young".

Jeffrey Young

Superintendent

Hancock County Educational Service Center