

Dear Senator,

I am a resident of Berea, and my child Attends Berea-Midpark High School. I am very concerned about the negative impacts the proposed budget would have on our amazing school system. As you prepare to vote on the state budget, please consider the following points:

The Fair School Funding Plan was created to address Ohio's unconstitutional reliance on property taxes to fund schools. The House version of the state budget removes the final two years of this phase-in.

Under this version, Berea City Schools would receive only a 4.5% increase in funding instead of the 7.9% we would receive with full implementation.

The House budget increases private school voucher funding by \$500 million while increasing public school funding by only \$220 million. This is not fair. 90% of Ohio's students attend public schools. Prioritizing vouchers diverts critical resources away from the vast majority of students who attend Ohio's public schools.

House Bill 96 proposes capping school district cash balances at 30% and redirecting any surplus as property tax relief.

This could cost Berea City Schools an estimated \$2 million in FY26. These funds are already part of our five-year forecast and support student programs. Redirecting them undermines voter intent and local financial planning.

Berea City School District has not asked voters for new operating funds since 2012. We've been responsible stewards of taxpayer money and have maintained financial stability without burdening our community.

Berea's third annual School Showcase drew in families and community members and highlighted student entrepreneurship, performing arts, and innovation. Programs like calming corners in every K-5 classroom, expanded mental health partnerships, and six full-time Student & Family Support Specialists demonstrate how the district is proactively addressing student well-being.

PLEASE!! Do not eliminate the final phase of the Fair School Funding Plan, do not repurpose voter-approved district cash balances for one-time property tax relief, fully fund public schools before increasing private voucher programs, and protect local control and long-term planning

by respecting district savings. If possible, I invite you to visit Berea City School District to see firsthand the impact of strategic investment in students.

Sincerely,

Christy Wiggins

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