

**Testimony on SFY 26/27 Operating Budget
Senate Finance Committee**

May 28, 2025

Daniel Hardesty
7194 Hodgson Road
Mentor, OH 44060

Chairman Cirino, Vice-Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson,
and esteemed committee members,

I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify in writing regarding HB 96. My name is Daniel Hardesty, and I have three daughters who attend the Mentor Public School District and graduate of Brimfield Public Schools.

I am writing to you today to urge you to fully implement the Fair School Funding Plan (FSFP) as was intended and promised. The current version of HB 96 replaces the FSFP phase-in with temporary "bridge funding." This represents a departure from bipartisan intent of the plan, which was to provide funding that addressed the actual costs of educating Ohio's students and that was carefully developed with the input of educators, policy experts, treasurers and chiefs of finance, and superintendents. The FSFP has brought stability and fairness to Ohio's public school finance system.

HB 96, as written, shifts the burden of the costs of educating Ohio's children to local communities and diminishes the role of the state's responsibility to provide education to our children.

Additionally, the suggested 30% cap on district cash reserves are outlandish. Districts that have been careful stewards of their taxpayers' dollars should not have to face uncertainty. Reserves are to be lauded and are essential for our schools and help us avoid putting local levies on the ballot. My understanding is that the 30% cap would create a nearly \$12K loss for Mentor Schools in just the 2026 FY.

I, as a parent and Ohioan, ask the Ohio Senate Finance Committee to:

1. Fully fund the Fair School Funding Plan
2. Eliminate the cap on cash reserves for schools

Most respectfully,



Daniel Hardesty