

Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee  
House Bill 110 Proponent Testimony  
Licking Heights Local School District  
May 6, 2021

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, members of the Primary and Secondary Education Committee. My name is Philip Wagner. I am the Superintendent of the Licking Heights Local School District and with me is the Licking Heights Treasurer, Mr. Todd Griffith. We are here today to testify in support of House Bill 110.

To provide greater context for our school district, we are extremely fast growing with a current enrollment of nearly 4,800 students. This is my tenth year as superintendent and during this time student enrollment has grown from 3,300 students to 4,800. Our fast growth, combined with the state funding gain cap and expansion of private school vouchers, adversely impacts our student classroom experience. As an example, many of our kindergarten classrooms are at 28 students per class, and our ELL population ranks seventh-highest in the state. As our district grows so quickly, it is becoming more diverse in many ways, including:

- 46.2% of our students are on the free and reduced lunch program.
- 16.3% of our students are ELL and more than 30 languages are spoken in the school district
- 45% White, 28% Black, 15% Asian, 5% Hispanic, 7% Multiracial
- Licking Heights' State Share Index is 56%
- Enrollment has grown by 330% over the last 20 years.

In recent years, Licking Heights has been strangled by the state funding gain cap. We have tried to help the school district function with less reliance on state aid. In many respects, changes to the employee insurance plans and the stimulation of community economic development have helped, but such efforts are not large enough to surmount the impact of the gain cap with such a fast-growing school district. The majority of our student growth and population change has occurred within the past decade.

Due to the state funding gain cap, we have lost \$72 million over the last eight years. In fact, this year alone the gain cap cost our students and community more than \$12 million. Licking Heights receives less than 50% of what the state funding formula calculates, which continues to hurt our long-term financial strategy. We have the highest property tax rates in Licking County and much of that is due to constructing our fourth new school building in 17 years, which amounts to over 100 million dollars in debt we still have to service.

We are one of the fastest growing districts in the State of Ohio and will continue to grow rapidly. In fact, current projections for 2030 conservatively show our school district growing to more than 6,200 students. It is hard to fathom such rapid growth as we approach astronomical deficits, with no relief in state funding.

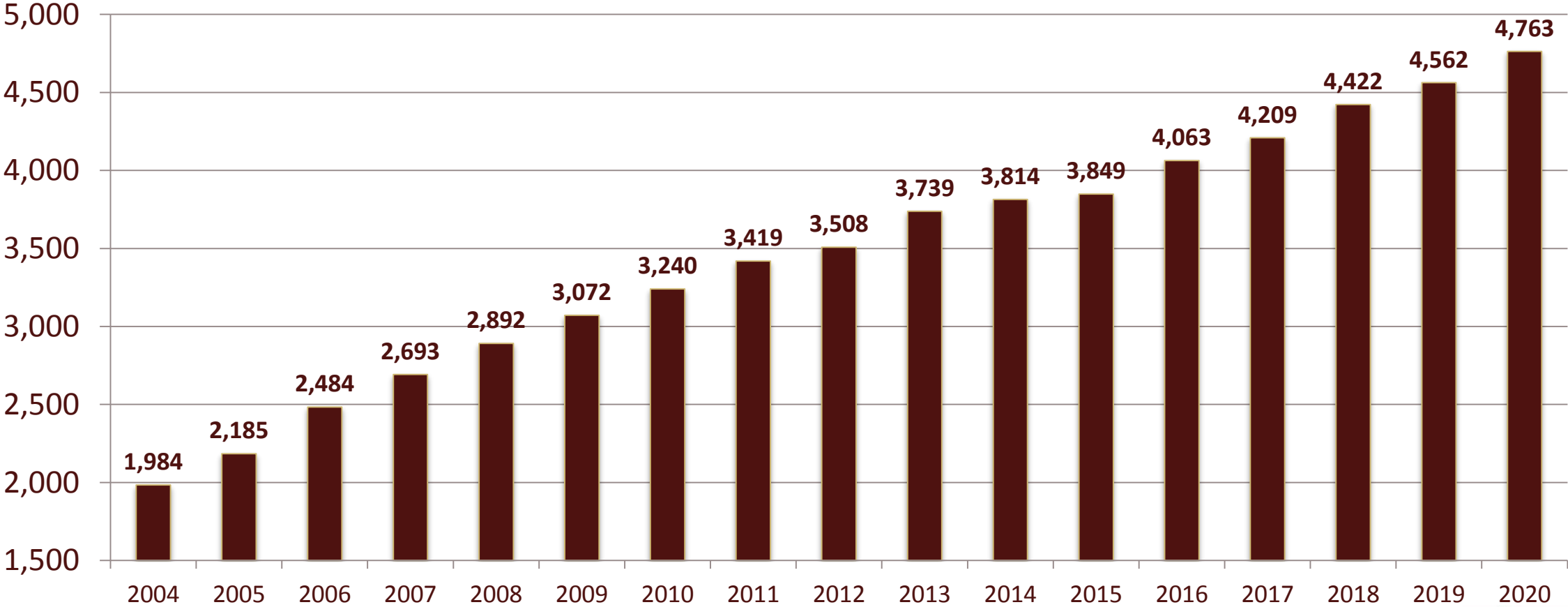
Because of the gain cap, we will need to make deep cuts to our budget and continue to increase student to teacher classroom ratios. We already rank second-lowest in per-pupil expenditure in the state, while educating each and every child, regardless of ability, in accordance with all state and federal mandates.

This concludes our testimony and we would be happy to address your questions. Thank you for your time and attention.

Philip H. Wagner, Ph.D.  
Superintendent

Todd Griffith  
Treasurer

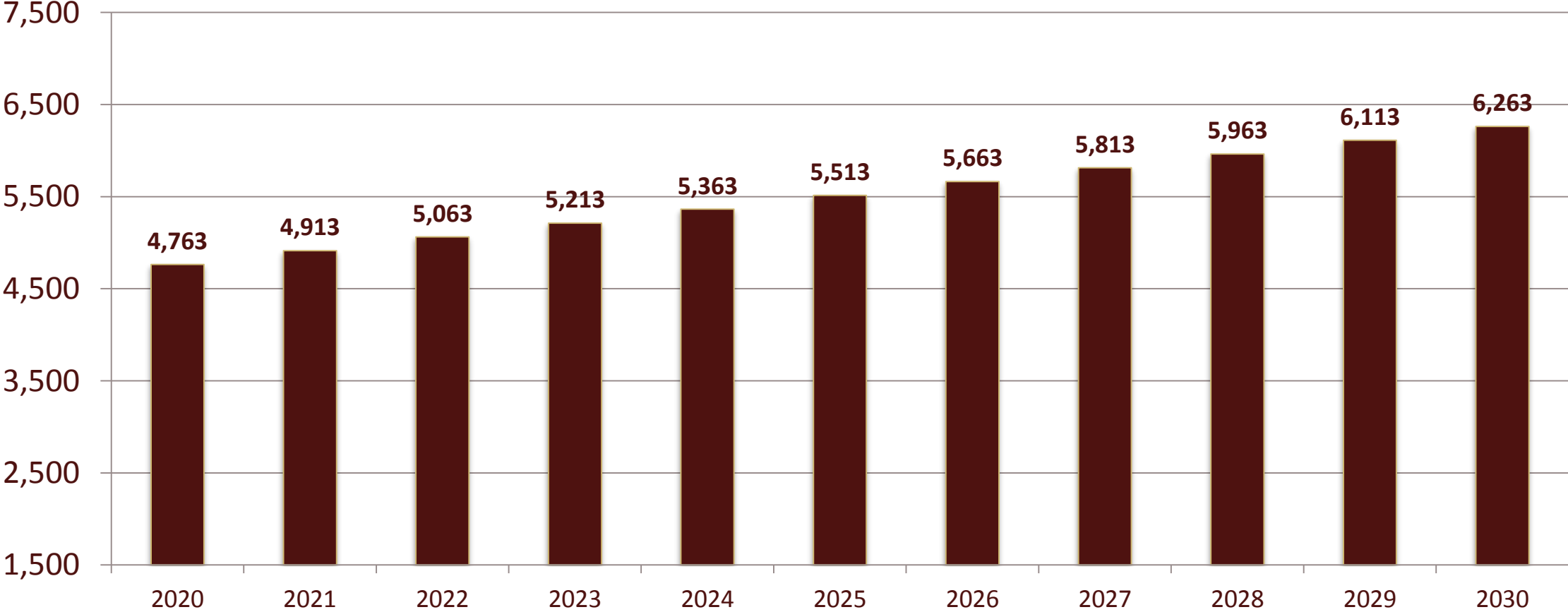
# Licking Heights Local School District Historical Enrollment



LICKING HEIGHTS LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



# Licking Heights Local School District Projected Enrollment



# Licking Heights Local School District Cap Impact

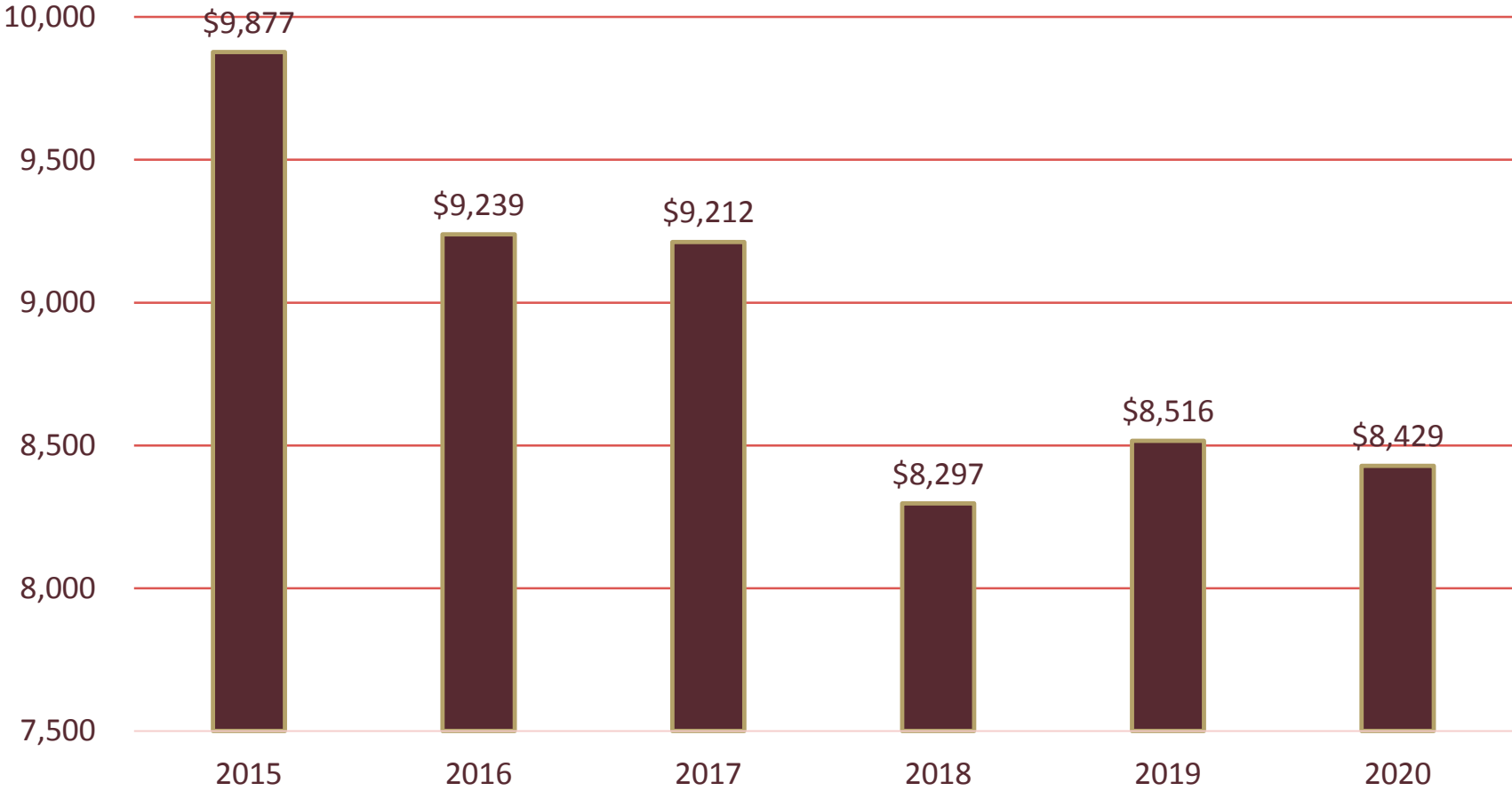
	CALCULATED STATE FUNDING	TOTAL STATE FUNDING	Gained/Losing
FY14	\$14,972,368	\$8,780,939	-\$6,191,429
FY15	\$15,896,249	\$9,702,938	-\$6,193,311
FY16	\$18,068,732	\$10,512,901	-\$7,555,830
FY17	\$19,292,591	\$11,284,884	-\$8,007,706
FY18	\$22,854,875	\$11,932,800	-\$10,922,075
FY19	\$23,483,740	\$12,629,056	-\$10,854,684
FY20	\$23,048,158	\$12,193,474	-\$10,854,684
FY21	\$23,287,043	\$12,432,360	-\$10,854,684

Total Unfunded Amount Over The Last 8 Years: \$71,434,403

**LICKING HEIGHTS LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**



# Licking Heights Local School District Total Expenditure Per Pupil



LICKING HEIGHTS LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



# Licking Heights Local School District District-to-District Comparison

City	District	Base State Aid	ADM	State Share Index
Pataskala	LH	9,098,069	4,559**	56%
Pataskala	SWL	14,629,619	4,258**	46%
	Difference:	-5,531,550	301	

\*Source: H.B. 166 Student Wellness and Success Funds, Comparison of Executive to House, FY2020-FY2021 Model

\*\*FY19 enrollment



## Licking Heights Local School District Fiscal Year Projected Expenditures - General Fund (001)

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Starting Balance	\$12,205,405	\$21,998,398	\$23,740,960	\$19,286,916	\$12,768,710	\$5,330,103
Estimated Expenditures	\$40,716,619	\$45,903,033	\$52,724,354	\$55,352,744	\$57,489,815	\$61,758,120
Estimated Revenue	\$50,509,613	\$47,682,464	\$48,270,310	\$48,834,539	\$50,031,208	\$50,132,036
Ending Cash Balance	\$21,998,398	\$23,740,960	\$19,286,916	\$12,768,710	\$5,330,103	<b>-\$6,293,980</b>
Revenue over (under) Expenditures	\$9,642,185	\$1,779,431	<b>-\$4,454,044</b>	<b>-\$6,518,205</b>	<b>-\$7,438,607</b>	<b>-11,624,084</b>

