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Senate Testimony – Spring 2021
Fair School Funding Plan in HB110

Dear Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee,

I live in Cleveland Heights and have two both who recently graduated from Cleveland Heights/University Heights High School. They started out in a private school up to 3rd grade and so I understand both sides of the coin. However, when my children started to attend CHUH schools, I got to witness the truth of the school system that is so unfairly penalized.

Both my children not only received an outstanding education, they made lifelong friends with people who live under the poverty level. It was the education by the deeply dedicated teachers and staff that resulted in now college graduations and now full time jobs for them all. I never thought I'd find myself as an advocate for quality public education but here I am.

The CHUH public school system accepts all who come to our community, both rich and the poor. They care for them as equals and have a long record of moving each student to the next level, at whenever they join our system. All students deserve the investment of our time and public resources.

I grew up and attended Brecksville-Broadview Heights school system and my boys received equal and frankly a better education at CHUH. The state's current grading system is unfair and damaging. Both my boys were honor students and received excellent scholarships to DePaul University and Arizona State University. The state's investment in our schools was essential.

As I am, are you also committed to the equal value of every resident of our state? When public funds are used for parallel systems that operate with different rules, the public system and its civic benefits are broken. The most fragile children suffer as a "one size approach" does not fit all.

The school funding challenge is to develop a system that is responsive to both the diversity of school districts and the diverse needs of the students they serve. I pray that you will consider a careful process full of corrections and improvements, that formulated the Fair School Funding plan and urges you to support it because it advances fairness and benefits us all.

Thank you for your service and dedication,

Vikki Nowak