

# Streetsboro City Schools

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## House Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education - HB 33 Testimony

**Streetsboro City School District  
Windham Exempted Village School District  
Portage County  
Kyle T. Kiffer, Treasurer/CFO**

**March 22nd, 2023**

Chair Richardson, Ranking Member Isaacsohn, and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today on House Bill (HB) 33.

My name is Kyle Kiffer and I serve as the Treasurer/CFO for the Streetsboro City School District and the Windham Exempted Village School District in Portage County. I serve two wonderful northeast Ohio communities. Streetsboro lies where 480 East ends and intersects with the Ohio Turnpike (Interstate 80) and is a mix of a committed residential community with a thriving and supportive business sector. Driving further east on the turnpike is the rural setting of Windham Schools residing next to the James A. Garfield Joint Military Training Center.

I serve two Districts, both 15 miles apart from each other, but two very different situations. Let me explain.

The Streetsboro City School District is approximately 25 square miles, maintains four educational buildings, a board office, annex building, technology facility, central services building, and bus garage. The District employs approximately 300-330 staff members (158 teachers, 30 aides, 23 transportation staff, 20 cafeteria employees, 18 custodian and maintenance staff, 13 secretaries, 16 administrators, various coaches, and other important district positions that focus on the whole child and entire student experience). According to census information the community of Streetsboro has a population of 17,265 with a per capita income of \$ 35,917 and a median household income of \$ 70,851.

The Windham Exempted Village School District is approximately 15 square miles, operates three educational buildings, a board office, and bus garage and employ's approximately 80 staff members (51 teachers, six maintenance and custodial workers, five administrators, various coaches, two secretaries, and six support staff members). Windham Schools as a population of 3,426 with a per capita income is \$ 22,208 with a medium household income of \$ 50,080.

Streetsboro City Schools enrolls approximately 1,900 students and Windham Schools has around 450 students. Both Districts' also send students to the nearby Maplewood Career Center, a joint vocational facility which focuses students on career and technical education for high school and adult learners.

Though very different described in the information above, these two wonderful District communities, through the bimonthly State Foundation payments, have benefited and will continue to benefit from the Fair School Funding Plan. State funded dollars account for around 25% of General Fund Revenues for Streetsboro City Schools and the inverse is true for Windham Schools, where 75% of State Funding accounts for General Fund Revenues. In my opinion, that simple difference between two districts, two unique different types of budgets benefiting from State dollars, is the beauty of the Fair School Funding plan. The formula is able to account for different and specific situations within each District.

This bipartisan solution to school funding draws upon the expertise of Superintendent's, Treasurer's, administrators, teachers, and all other staff members and invested parties that focuses on each child and meeting their needs. From first being greeted by a bus driver early in the morning, through the course of that day that includes nutritious cafeteria meals, intense rigor of individualized learning, to logging out of their Chromebook at night, the formula helps each student in our Ohio communities, regardless if it is like a suburban school District like Streetsboro or a rural school District like Windham.

However, for the formula to work, it needs to be fully implemented. We are 1/3 of the way there and I am here today to ask on behalf of my students, my district and the community I serve that you move forward with the next steps toward fully implementing the formula. This includes, as intended, updating the current formula inputs from 2018 to 2022 data to accurately reflect the financial realities that are going on within our schools.

We need the predictability this formula provides. An objective, rational, and transparent solution to school funding. It is an objective formula that is research-based, with every dollar allocated based on an identifiable component necessary in a student's education to prepare that student for success.

In my nine years working at the Auditor of State's office before starting my career in school finance, the general understanding was that funding in Ohio was always inconsistent which then shifts the burden of funding our schools to the local taxpayer. By continuing the phase-in of the formula, schools in Ohio will have the much-needed stability and predictability to provide more accurate reporting, realistic five-year forecasts, and proper budgeting. This would give Districts the ability to implement educational programming for our students in the long term.

Further, while all our communities have struggled with challenges exacerbated by the pandemic, it is our children in poverty who have struggled the most. That is why I ask that this general assembly prioritize funding a study on disadvantaged pupil impact aid (DPIA). There are more children in need than ever before in Ohio, regardless of the type of District. Whether through academic or behavioral issues, or likely a combination of both, the students are in need of the resources inside, but also outside of the classroom.

As an example within Streetsboro Schools, we have used the Implementation of the Fair School Funding Plan, through its Student Wellness and Success component part of the formula, working with our Educational

Service Center, we hired a full-time social worker as well as two additional guidance counselors. While allocating resources to the student's social-emotional well-being of the District, we have already seen the quick results of this investment. Our District Social Worker has been a tremendous asset to our community, connecting families in need to different community groups within the area. This Social Worker serves as a liaison and connected various departments within the District to start a food service debt relief program. This program gives our community an ability to donate to a fund that helps alleviate negative student café balances. We do not turn away a child that is in need of a meal. This example of Streetsboro's social worker is one of the many positives of this formula.

The Streetsboro City School District and the Windham Exempted Village School District supports the Fair School Funding Plan because it clearly outlines an approach for funding the cost of educating our children.

Personally, I am a product of the public schools in Ohio. As a graduate of Valley Forge High School through the Parma City School District, it was there that I saw the value of public education through various teachers and coaches that supported and encouraged me in my academic career. Coupled with my mother and father as my foundational support, I had the environment to learn in and out of the classroom, thrive, and excel processing into college. I hope that the General Assembly is able to continue with its phase-in, update base costs inputs, and then be able to see the fruits of its labor and observe the next generation of Ohio students thrive and excel in the classroom and out.

Chair Richardson and members of the committee, thank you for your time and attention. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.