

Proponent Testimony for House Bill 33

Senate Education Committee

Fair School Funding

Drake Porter, Student

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Drake Porter. I am a junior attending Hilliard Darby High School and I live in an apartment in Hilliard as well. Today, I am here in full support of the Fair School Funding Plan and HB 33 and to remind you of not just the struggles of under-funded schools but also to question the conditions students are supposed to be learning in.

I come from a well funded school and have never questioned whether or not we would have air conditioning or walk into a bathroom without running water. A few years ago, I noticed every classroom in my school contained a new large TV that teachers could utilize to make it easier for teachers to teach and kids to learn. In 2018, one of the two existing middle schools were rebuilt into more updated capacity appropriate building. With this new addition, it moved the 6th grade to the old middle school providing new free space for more unique educational opportunities.

Every year our district gets 3 million dollars during the summer to focus on repairs and updates around the district which pays for things like updated roofing and pavement as well as alternative resources like new technology and security. Just this year, a water leak in my first period

psychology class that was completely fixed within a couple of days including a new ceiling tile. When getting all of these resources and space, I never gave it a second thought or realized how lucky I was to be in a district where learning was prioritized in not just the education department but also the environment in which we learned in.

Growing up, I remember my mom trying to keep us in our school district not only to keep our friends together but also because she knew that the resources we received from my school weren't equal in other districts. Yes, good schools are expensive. Living in a "good" district put a lot of hardship on my single mom with inflated rent prices that mean tight belts and little to no money for extras. But I'm lucky. My mom has been able to sacrifice for my education. Good education is supposed to be accessible to everyone no matter your income, not all mothers can keep their kids in a "good school district".

When talking to my cousin who attended Columbus Alternative High School, she explained to me the kinds of experiences she had when she was attending. Not only is the building old and extremely outdated but was originally used as an elementary school. I remember her telling me stories about various ambulances at the school during the hot months because kids would pass out from heat stroke and even days where school would be canceled due to the heat in the building and this same trend for when it would be too cold. She explained how in the bathrooms pipes that were exposed were covered in duct tape from both recent and old leaking and problems and given no further attention from there. In the bathroom, stalls were missing doors and toilets with broken seats and even instances of toilets falling off the walls completely. The sinks in these same bathrooms almost never had running water as well. I was also shown that the

available water fountains at the school were found with plants growing from them. Not only were planets living in the building but cockroaches, bats, bugs, and even a snake were all seen in the building from students. She even talked about a particular event from when she had to evacuate the school due to the transformer exploding from flooding in the basement and causing power in the whole school to turn off and starting a fire and were sent back to school the very next day. After this event, students wore pins around the school stating they don't feel safe in the building they are met to learn in.

Getting proper and necessary funding for these schools would not only give money towards fixing essentials to the building like air conditioning and plumbing, but also help to create an environment where kids who attend feel comfortable and safe. I feel school is supposed to be an environment where kids can come to feel cared for and valued regardless of what their life looks like outside of the building. How can we say these kids are cared for when the building our students are in has proven to be a better environment for wildlife than learning. This bill would also provide funding for updated technology giving an equal experience for kids to learn, grow, and be as successful as possible no matter their zip code. I ask that you please consider my testimony and vote yes to funding the Fair School Funding Plan. Additionally, fully and permanently fund the Fair School Funding Plan starting in this budget - don't wait to phase it in and update costs to reflect costs of expenses today. Thank you.











10:24



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