

[INSERT DISTRICT LOGO OR PRINT ON DISTRICT LETTERHEAD]

House Education Committee
House Bill 96
February [], 2025

Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on House Bill (HB) 96, the biennial budget.

My name is [Your Name] and I serve as the [Title] for the [School District Name] in [County or Counties]. The [School District Name] *[provide any relevant details on type of district (rural, suburban, etc.), size (in square miles, number of schools, etc.), number of students served, etc.]*

As a [Title] in [School District Name], I see firsthand how our schools shape not just individual student futures, but the vitality of our entire community. That's why I'm here to speak about the Fair School Funding Plan - because our schools thrive, our communities thrive, our economy thrives, and Ohio thrives.

The Fair School Funding Plan provides an objective, rational, and transparent solution to school funding. Created in collaboration with school district leaders and expert practitioners, it translates real student needs into concrete resources. For example, the formula accounts for the actual costs of providing essential education components like appropriate class sizes, student support services, and educational technology - resources that directly impact student success in today's world.

However, for the formula to work as designed, it needs to be fully implemented with updated inputs. Research consistently shows that education investment generates significant returns. Each dollar invested in education can generate economic benefits through increased earnings and reduced social costs.

I am here today to ask on behalf of my students, my district, and the community I serve to request that the House continues the phase-in of the formula with updated base cost inputs. This will provide the stability and predictability our schools need to create accurate five-year forecasts and implement sustainable educational programming, and will account for the inflation we are all experiencing.

[Insert details specific to your district related to the Fair School Funding Plan. Focus on what it means for your district and the need for the Fair School Funding Plan to be fully phased-in. Focus on the opportunities your district will be able to provide/ sustain with increase funding.

- *Some topics to consider (depending on your district):*
 - Your local situation: explain how valuation increases have affected your district, if applicable, as well as the cash balance your district has and the plans for it.

- Workforce Ready. Explain how the funding is necessary to fully implement programming so that students are “workforce ready.” We need to invest in the formula in order to invest in the pipeline of future leaders and our future workforce.
- Special Education – The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) lead a study to examine the true costs of special education and recommend weights that would allow for a more accurate partnership between the state and schools. Implementation of these weights is important to our district because....
- DPIA weights– DEW also led a study to determine the cost of educating student who are economically disadvantaged. Over half of Ohio students are considered economically disadvantaged. In our district the percentage is... State why this is important
- English Language Learner (ELL) weights (if applicable) DEW also led a study to determine the cost of educating ELL students. State whether your district has a significant ELL population and how this affects you.
- Predictability. We need the formula fully implemented to ensure sustainability throughout the state. When the future of funding is unpredictability, districts are not able to plan for student needs and implement the programming necessary in their communities and schools. *[Note – The unpredictable nature of school funding has led some districts to increase their reserves and cash balances because they do not know what the next biennium will bring. Rising cash balances is not something you would likely mention in your testimony, but please be prepared to discuss in Q&A.]*

In closing, the Fair School Funding Plan represents more than just a funding formula - it represents our commitment to every Ohio student, family, and community. By fully implementing this plan, we invest in stronger communities, a more competitive workforce, and a brighter future for Ohio. Thank you for your consideration of these crucial next steps in supporting Ohio's educational excellence.

Chair Fowler Arthur 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.

[Two things to keep in mind: 1) Re-word content to meet your own speaking style, it will flow more naturally for you as you speak. Also, we don't want everyone's testimony to look like a cut-and-paste. 2) Add any other relevant information you think will strengthen the arguments.]