[INSERT DISTRICT LOGO OR PRINT ON DISTRICT LETTERHEAD]

**House Finance Committee**

**HB [\_\_\_] Testimony**

**[School District Name], [County or Counties]**

**[Your Name], [Title]**

**[\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_], 2023**

Chair [\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_], Vice Chair [\_\_\_\_\_\_], Ranking Member [\_\_\_\_\_\_], and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today on House Bill (HB) **[\_\_\_]**.

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***.]

The Fair School Funding Plan is a bipartisan solution to school funding that draws upon the expertise of practitioners, as well as other invested parties from within the field of education and our communities. This formula is about ***each child*** and meeting their needs. The formula is also about our communities, because when our schools thrive, our communities thrive 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 practitioners, 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.

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 enacted in the last biennial budget.

We need the predictability this formula provides. Funding in Ohio has been consistently inconsistent. This unpredictability often unduly shifts the burden of funding our schools to the local taxpayer. With the current phase-in, my district is receiving 1/3 of the state’s share of the base cost for my district’s students. That means that the local taxpayers are expected to pay the remainder of the state share. By continuing the phase-in of the formula, schools in Ohio will have the much-needed stability and predictability to provide more accurate and realistic five-year forecasts and giving the ability to implement educational programming for our students based on this accurate long term plan.

Further, while all our communities have struggled with challenges exacerbated by the pandemic, it is our children in poverty who have struggled the most. Approximately, one out of two children, or half of Ohio’s student population, is considered to be economically disadvantaged. That is why we ask that this general assembly prioritize disadvantaged pupil impact aid (DPIA) funding with the continued phase-in this biennium to ensure all children have the opportunities to thrive.

[School District Name] supports the Fair School Funding Plan because it clearly outlines an approach for funding the cost of educating Ohio’s children. In our district this means … .

***[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):***
  + 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.
  + Wellness. Provide examples for how funding supports mental health and learning loss (reminder that ESSER funds are “one-time funds” that must be used “to prevent, prepare for, and respond to” COVID-19)
  + DPIA funding (in light of pandemic and ESSER dollars)**.** Our communities, including our schools, have seen challenges over the past few years that no one could have ever predicted. With the pandemic, we have seen children struggle with social-emotional needs, as well as learning loss related to the disruptions in our families’ lives. ESSER funding has assisted with addressing these needs; however, these federal dollars are limited in their purposes and must be spent within a short period of time. To implement the programming our children need, the DPIA funds in the formula are necessary…
  + 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 of they do not know what the next biennium with bring. Rising cash balances is not something you would likely mention in your testimony, but please be prepared to discuss in Q&A.]

Chair [\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_] 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.]