



Madeira City Schools
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The Honorable Senator Bill Blessing

1 Capitol Square
1st Floor, 143
Columbus, OH 43215

March 21, 2025

Re: Support for Fair School Funding in Ohio

Dear Senator Blessing,

As a duly elected body in unity for our school district, **Madeira City Schools Board of Education urges your continued support for Ohio's Fair School Funding Plan including fully funding the guarantee and the necessary updates to its cost inputs.** As a strong advocate for public education, we believe ensuring equitable and sustainable funding for our schools is essential to providing high-quality education to all students, regardless of their zip code.

The partnership between state and local funding must remain balanced. Without updates to base cost inputs, while property values and incomes continue to rise, the funding formula risks becoming skewed—placing an even greater financial burden on local taxpayers. Districts like Madeira, where enrollment has grown by 13.4% since FY19, rely heavily on the funding guarantee to maintain stability. If the guarantee is reduced or eliminated, Madeira and similar districts will be forced to shift more of the financial responsibility onto local property owners, who already fund 76% of the district's budget.

Additionally, as tax reform efforts move forward, it is crucial to recognize that property tax changes could disproportionately impact districts with limited access to state funding. Madeira, for example, does not benefit from increasing state allocations and operates outside the 20-mill floor, meaning House Bill 920 automatically adjusts tax rates downward when property values rise. To mitigate potential tax burdens on residents, we urge you to consider expanding the homestead exemption with state reimbursement and implementing a circuit breaker tax credit for homeowners meeting specific income and property value thresholds.

Madeira's success is a testament to responsible financial management. The district employs a long-term Permanent Improvement Strategy, maintains a healthy cash balance policy (projected at 55% of expenditures for FY25), and leverages partnerships like the Greater Cincinnati Insurance Consortium to control costs. Additionally, as a nonunion district, Madeira ensures salary competitiveness through annual studies of 29 local school districts, with average base increases of just 2.15% over the past five years.

Our public schools are the foundation of our communities and the future of Ohio. **We urge you to continue funding the Fair School Funding Plan, ensure necessary formula updates, and protect local districts from unintended tax burdens.** Thank you for your time and consideration. We welcome any opportunity to discuss this matter further and would urge you to reach out to Treasurer / CFO Emily Hauser at 513-205-5285 or Superintendent Kenji Matsudo at 513-615-8365.

Sincerely,


Ryan Lee, BOE President


Steve Bernicke, Vice President


Brad Cunningham, Member


Dave Eberly, Member


Ann Ramos, Member

"A school community where learning is personalized and success is ensured"