

## **Unbelievable! The House version of the state budget is a wholesale attack on public school districts**

The House version of the budget may be the worst attack on public school districts since the common school was legislated in 1821. On the state funding side, the House has taken the first step to kill the Cupp/Patterson Fair School Funding plan. To add insult to injury, the House is adopting a scheme to penalize school districts for being good stewards of tax money provided to them by school district patrons.

School districts must file a five-year budget forecast. Most school tax levies do not increase in revenue produced as property values are increased on 3-year and 6-year cycles. State funding is unpredictable. Economic downturns happen. Emergencies arise. Inflation is the general rule. State mandates which cost districts more are imposed. Hence the school district needs a "rainy day fund" in their budgets. School districts need a healthy budget balance.

The House Budget Bill would force districts that have a healthy balance to return a portion of their balance to property taxpayers in the district. This will lessen pressure for state officials to fix a broken property tax system. This is one of the most egregious attacks of the public common school system since 1821. What are these state officials thinking? That is not hard to figure out. They are attempting to kill the common school system to totally privatize education.

Should the state give a refund from the rainy day fund to Ohio taxpayers?

### **Ohio House Committee makes last-minute changes to K-12 education funding in its budget** **WYSO | By [Jo Ingles](#)**

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Ohio House Finance Chair Brian Stewart speaks with reporters after the committee passed the omnibus budget on April 8, 2025

The Ohio House Finance Committee passed its version of the state budget Tuesday afternoon but not before making a few tweaks to it. And one of those changes involved a controversial provision that would allow local taxpayers to get a refund if their school districts carry over more money in their operating budgets than lawmakers deem necessary.

Rep. Brian Stewart (R-Ashville) said the decision was to allow the school districts to carry over 30% of their operating budget before being penalized. The earlier plan capped that amount at 25%. Stewart said even at 30%, local property taxpayers in more than 400 school district will get a refund because of high carryover.

"Our determination is this. If this bill has been in effect already, this would constitute a \$4.2 billion of, property tax relief. Cumulatively, the same about half all of our residents," Stewart said.

In recent days, education leaders have lobbied hard to get the House to go back to funding the final two-year phase in of the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan that was passed back in 2021. But the outright funding for districts is still not based on that formula. House leaders note school districts will receive more in their budget than they have in the past. But advocates for schools point out that they will receive less than they would have in Governor DeWine's proposed budget, which did fund the final two years of the Fair School Funding Plan, albeit a lower levels than school districts wanted due to 2022 data being used in the calculations instead of numbers that are more current.

The budget proposal passed out of committee without a single Democrat voting for it. Rep. Bride Rose Sweeney said the House should have stuck to funding the Fair School Funding Plan because, without it, Ohio's funding model is unconstitutional.

"We started the journey to finally get this an unconstitutional formula we had. This was the year to finally we could have been on the floor tomorrow saying we have a constitutional fund, not we're going to actually do our duty, but what we are doing is arbitrarily walking away from that. So next year, we don't have one anymore," Sweeney said.

Sweeney called the cap on the carryover is "fake property tax relief."

"If we put this, this bill today into law, we're going to have an explosion of property taxes. And how they are claiming to do property tax relief is to rob opportunity of students for one time, injuring every single school district's, bank account meeting. They're going to have to go to the ballot to do that. I am very concerned," Sweeney said.

All of the Republicans on the finance committee voted to pass the budget, with its new changes. It will go up for a vote in the full House on Wednesday where it will likely pass along party lines.

"You know, this is a budget that is, you know, increases funding for public schools, increases public funding for public education, higher education increases funding for libraries, the largest tax relief property tax in Ohio's history," Stewart said.

Republican Governor Mike DeWine has said even after the House version passes, it will still have to go to the Senate and a conference committee.