

Good afternoon,

My name is Sarah Parent and I am a parent in Avon. I have been actively involved with Avon Community School Corporation for 13 years in various capacities, but most recently through a group called Oriole Advocates. This group has a mission to lend a voice to the school district to promote student achievement and community engagement. We continue to take a close look at school funding. Today I am speaking for a significant block of Avon-Washington Township residents, both with kids in school and other groups, and we have concerns about this proposed budget.

I stood before this committee two years ago and shared my concerns regarding the school funding formula. I want to thank this committee for its efforts in ensuring that the funding formula adjustments addressed some of the needs of our state's growing suburban school corporations, from which Avon also benefitted. Because of that change, my children now have lower class sizes because the district was able to hire 34 more teachers. However, I've discovered that our school district is still trying to recover from the impacts of the adjustments made with the 2009 property tax cap implementation. Let me make it clear that I am grateful to live in a district that has emphasized efficiency, and welcomed community input to help them become more efficient, but they are cutting into bone now. I talk to the teachers. I talk to the staff. I listen to students. I'm not sure how much more lean a school district can be.

Given the taxes that I and other Hendricks County taxpayers already pay, I don't feel it's fair for community members to face additional taxation in passing a referendum to address budget shortfalls when it is the state's obligation to provide adequate funding. After reviewing the House approved budget, I quickly noticed it does not keep up with inflation. In an Economics class our kids learn about inflation and the impact it makes on a household budget like mine. If my salary remains flat, but the price of groceries and gas creeps up I have less money to spend on other necessities. Health care, groceries, etc have all kept going up. Now apply that example to a school district's budget. For Avon, it'll be a step backwards resulting in budget cuts again, but this time the district has more students to educate. Why is it that other similarly-situated suburban districts are scheduled for increases nearly three times that of Avon's? This seems inherently unfair. Not to mention that when we look at disadvantaged districts we can't forget the millions of dollars in federal Title funds they receive compared to what Avon receives.

Additionally, the House budget calls for Avon to lose \$650,000 in Performance Grant funds. I know those funds are tricky, but it is a way for high performing districts, like Avon, to maintain quality performance. If enrollment remains the same, per student funding levels are not keeping up with inflation coupled with the loss of performance grant money – this is unacceptable. Avon will again receive less money, but still be educating the same number – or a greater number - of students. Avon citizens are proud of the caliber of students our corporation generates, and, as tax payers, we want to maintain the quality education that fosters them.

This budget proposes a serious problem and we need you to support a budget that properly funds **public** education for the students of Avon. Our students and community members are counting on you.