

# A JOINT LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENTS AND TREASURERS OF BUTLER COUNTY



**November 21, 2025**

Dear Butler County Families, Friends, and Neighbors,

We know property taxes feel high right now — because they are. Seniors on fixed incomes worry about staying in their homes. Families are stretching budgets. Local businesses are feeling the strain. We understand, and we feel it too. Like you, we want real solutions that help families and protect our community's future.

As your local school superintendents and treasurers, we write not as politicians, but as parents, neighbors, and community members. We work hard to use your tax dollars wisely while ensuring our children receive the education they deserve.

Property taxes are the symptom, not the cause. The real problem is that the state has changed how schools and local services are funded. Over time, the state has taken on less of the cost, pushing more of the burden onto homeowners and farmers. Now, several new bills in Columbus could take millions of dollars from Butler County schools with no plan to replace it.

## How We Got Here

For years, state leaders have made tax changes that shifted the load from businesses to families, leaving homeowners to fund more of our schools, safety, and services.

Here are the facts:

- The State's share of school funding has gone down over time.
- Ohio now ranks 45th in the nation for how much the State spends on public education.
- Homeowners and farmers now pay nearly 70% of school property taxes, up from 47% in 1991.
- Ohio is now 8th in the nation for property tax burden while ranking 42nd for per-person state taxes.

Families are paying more while the State pays less. Instead of fixing the broken system, some leaders want to cut school funding further — blaming schools instead of addressing the real problem.

## **This Impacts More Than Schools**

Property taxes also fund the services that keep Butler County a safe and thriving place to live:

- Police, fire, and EMS
- Roads and bridges
- Libraries, parks, and senior services
- Local government operations

If property taxes were cut or removed completely, these vital services would be at risk. We agree taxes must be fair and affordable, but ending them would hurt every part of our community.

## **Our Children and Communities Deserve Better**

Every child in Butler County deserves great teachers, safe schools, and learning opportunities that prepare them for the future. These are not extras — they are investments in our local economy and in our children's success.

Schools are not overspending. They have been cutting costs, sharing services, and doing more with less for years. When schools are underfunded, it hurts more than classrooms. It affects jobs, home values, and the strength of our local economy.

## **A Call for Real, Balanced Reform**

We are not asking anyone to accept the way things are. We are asking for fair and responsible reform that helps families without hurting schools and vital services.

Real reform should include:

- Relief for those who need it most — like seniors, low-income families, and people with disabilities.
- Limits on rapid tax increases — so families can plan and afford their homes.
- More State support — to pay their fair share for schools and community services.
- Transparency and accountability — so communities understand how their money is being used.

## **Moving Forward Together**

We all want a system that works for families, protects services, and keeps our communities strong. Butler County can help lead that effort.

Here's how you can help:

- Learn about what really causes property taxes to rise.
- Ask your state lawmakers to fix the funding system.
- Share the facts with friends and neighbors.
- Speak up for reform, not repeal.

Our schools, services, homes, and children's futures are too important to risk on short-term fixes. Together, we can build a fair property tax system that works for everyone.

**With Gratitude and Commitment,**

**Butler County School Superintendents and Treasurers**

| <b>District</b>                             | <b>Superintendent</b>        | <b>Treasurer/CFO</b> |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Butler County Educational<br>Service Center | Jeff Brandt & Chris<br>Brown | Ken Ulm              |
| Butler Tech                                 | William Sprankles            | Paul Carpenter       |
| Edgewood City<br>Schools                    | Curtis Philpot               | Patti Bowers         |
| Fairfield City Schools                      | Billy Smith                  | Jay Phillips         |
| Hamilton City Schools                       | Andrea Blevins               | Jeremy Frazier       |
| Lakota Local Schools                        | Ashley Whitely               | Adam Zink            |
| Madison Local Schools                       | Jeff Staggs                  | Tearalee Frederick   |
| Middletown City<br>Schools                  | Deborah Houser               | Randall R. Bertram   |
| Monroe Local Schools                        | J. Robert Buskirk            | Amy Moore            |
| New Miami Local<br>Schools                  | Rhonda Parker                | Robin Bonar          |
| Ross Local Schools                          | William Rice                 | Steve Castator       |
| Talawanda City<br>Schools                   | Edward Theroux               | Shaunna Tafelski     |

# OHIO SCHOOLS FOR *Balanced* PROPERTY TAX REFORM

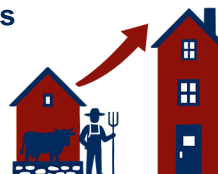
It's time for statewide reform on the way schools are funded.

## PROPERTY TAXES ARE HIGHER THAN EVER



now **45th** in the nation in state funding for public schools.

In 1991, homeowners and farmers paid **47%** of school property taxes.



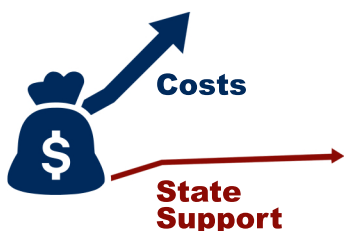
Today, they pay nearly **70%**



Tax policy shifts have reduced or eliminated business and utility contributions, while declining state revenue has slowed school funding. **The result:** homeowners and farmers are carrying a greater share than ever before.

## SCHOOLS ARE DOING MORE WITH LESS

The cost of running schools goes up every year, but the state's support hasn't kept up.



In **22** years state school funding has grown less than **1%** a year when adjusted for inflation.

Schools are being asked to do more with the same money.

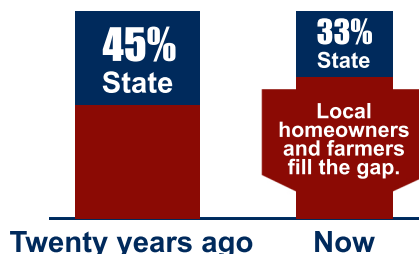
Schools have:

- Consolidated. There are 75% fewer districts than a century ago.
- Shared Services.
- Delayed Facility Updates/Maintenance.
- Increased Safety and Security Measures.
- Delivered Quality Results and Accountability.



## OHIO IS OUT OF BALANCE

The state has shifted the cost of education directly onto homeowners.



Strong schools are the foundation of strong communities, but the funding system weakens both.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- ✓ Talk to your legislators. Tell them balanced reform is needed.
- ✓ Share these facts with neighbors and community members.
- ✓ Ask: What would losing teachers, programs, or services mean in our community?
- ✓ **Tell your local story.**