



June 27, 2025

Dear Newark City Schools Residents,

We are reaching out to inform you about two bills currently under consideration in the Ohio General Assembly — House Bill 335 and House Bill 96 — and the serious implications they may have for our schools, city services, and community.

While these proposals seek to provide property-tax relief and reduce state income taxes, they would significantly remove or cap large portions of revenue that support public education — with no built-in replacement. The result would be larger class sizes, fewer programs, and increased reliance on local levies to maintain essential services.

Why Schools Rely On Operating Levies

Under current Ohio law, the majority of school funding is tied to property values. School districts' tax rates are capped at a minimum known as the 20-mill floor. When home values rise, the tax rate falls so that schools do not receive a dollar-for-dollar increase. Meanwhile, the costs of salaries, utilities, transportation, technology and supplies continue to climb yearly.

Because revenue cannot keep pace with inflation, Ohio's school districts must occasionally place operating levies on the ballot.

Newark City Schools has not asked for a new operating levy since 2009. In that time, we've responsibly managed taxpayer funds while expanding services at every grade level. We've grown after-school programming, offered free summer camps for 10 years, expanded STEM offerings K-12, added space to support student learning, strengthened workforce development efforts to connect students with local careers, and much more. All of this has been accomplished without asking more from local taxpayers.

Despite these successes, HB 335 and HB 96 would significantly reduce funding for Newark and other Ohio schools, potentially cutting tens of millions of dollars statewide — and shifting the burden onto local taxpayers.

How HB 335 and HB 96 would affect Newark

House Bill 335 would greatly reduce Newark's budget by millions of dollars. This would impact our district immediately, with changes taking effect with 2026 property tax bills. This could lead to larger class sizes, cuts to critical supports that our students need, and would impact budgeting for arts, athletics, counseling, aides and more.

House Bill 96 — the State Budget Bill — would freeze base-cost funding and limit school district end-of-year reserves. These limits would decrease the ability for Newark to plan for long-term projects and could create the need for us to return to voters more often to maintain current services.

What You Can Do

These bills are still moving through the legislative process, and your voice can make a difference. If you believe strong public education is essential to a thriving community, we encourage you to contact your state leaders and share your concerns.

A short message with your name, ZIP code, and position is all that's needed:

- Representative Thad Claggett – (614) 466-1482
- Representative Kevin Miller – (614) 466-2500
- Senator Tim Schaffer – (614) 466-8076
- Governor Mike DeWine – (614) 466-3555

Our Commitment to Newark

We support tax reform that balances relief for families with continued investment in public services. However, we cannot support changes that undermine educational opportunity, weaken our local schools, or shift the cost to our residents without a long-term solution.

Newark City Schools has worked hand-in-hand with our community for years to support student success. With your continued partnership, we can protect what we've built — together.

Sincerely,

Newark City Schools Superintendent and Board of Education