Good evening, representatives. My name is Gary Anhalt and I'm a member of the Cedar Rapids School Board. As you, I'm an also an elected official. Our school board is committed to providing the best possible education for our community, Cedar Rapids.

Thanks to our outstanding staff and committed community, we currently provide an outstanding educational experience. Our high schools are recognized by the Washington Post listing of America's most challenging high schools, meaning many students are taking rigorous courses, and we do this celebrating diversity with over 40 languages spoken in our schools and nearly 50% of students on free or reduced lunch! We have expanded opportunities for middle school students to take high school classes. We are partnering with Kirkwood Community College to provide college credit during high school. We are converging opportunities with our neighboring districts to provide opportunities for our students (sharing is not just a rural school thing). Basically we are individualizing delivery of instruction so every student can reach their optimum capacity.

In order for our local board to provide the best, optimum learning experiences for students, we need the resources. Resources are controlled by you, our Representatives, the Governor and the Iowa Senate. We hear frequently that the State Budget “pie is only so big.” These proposed funding levels are so low that we will not be able to continue our current successes, let alone move forward with increases in student achievement.

Yes, the state budget is only so big, but you are the **bakers**, you can make a bigger pie. The pantry is full and you have the ability to restock it! Local boards are at your mercy. We can only work with what you give us. We want a world-class 21st-century education, too, but we need adequate funding to make that happen! If these low-levels are passed, we will have to cut staff and reduce programing. Cutting staff will mean larger class sizes and larger class sizes diminish our ability to individualize instruction. We will have fewer course offerings for students. In other words, we will lose our ability to reach every student and provide them with the tools and the training they need to reach their highest potential.

Please provide adequate funding, at least at 6%, so our schools can provide the outstanding education we all want for our children.  Thank you!