



## TWINSBURG CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

11136 Ravenna Road • Twinsburg OH 44087-1022

Phone: 330.486.2000

Fax: 330.425.7216

Kathryn M. Powers, Superintendent  
Martin Aho, Treasurer  
Jennifer C. Farthing, Director of Curriculum

Belinda McKinney, Director of Human Resources  
Denise P. Traphagen, Director of Pupil Services  
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House Government Accountability & Oversight Committee

Wednesday, March 7, 2018

Mark H. Curtis

Member, Twinsburg City Schools Board of Education

Chairman Blessing, Vice Chairman Reineke, Ranking Minority Member Clyde and members of the Committee, I am Mark Curtis, legislative liaison and member of the Twinsburg City Schools Board of Education. On behalf of my board colleagues, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony of my concerns regarding H.B. 512.

As an educator with over 25 years of experience, I oppose consolidating ODE with the Department of Higher Education and the Office of Workforce Transformation. ODE provides essential services to our local school districts, educational service centers and joint vocational school districts. Moving to a model where the unique needs of students in grades kindergarten through 12 are lost within an expanded bureaucracy is troubling. School districts rely on the expertise and service from ODE in implementation of Ohio's complicated and under-funded school-funding model. The ODE is not perfect but given its continued downsizing over the years along with increased responsibilities, the department continues to provide an indispensable service to our districts.

If the purpose of HB 512 is to improve cooperation and communication among the affected agencies, I and my colleagues urge lawmakers to look at less drastic measures that do not take away the focus on serving Ohio's public school districts and their students. I believe that the goals of this bill can be accomplished without the merger of these departments. Further study and gathering input from stakeholders in a more thoughtful manner would prove beneficial.

I also oppose the transfer of the duties of the State Board of Education to the new agency. HB 512 would undermine the role and authority of the elected members of the State Board of Education. By stripping it of all but its regulatory role on specified matters, the board would no longer be acting in any significant way on behalf of the citizens the members represent. As an elected board member, I believe Ohio will be at its best when the interests of the people are served through publicly elected boards. The State Board of Education is no exception. This bill potentially sets a dangerous precedent with far reaching consequences.

My colleagues and I seek to be partners in improving the delivery of quality education to our students and appreciate being given an opportunity to be heard.