



Madison-Champaign Educational Service Center

We Work to Serve

Dr. Daniel Kaffenbarger, Superintendent
Matthew Ketcham, Treasurer

House Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education Testimony on ESC Funding in the FY 2020-2021 Biennial Budget April 11, 2019

Co-Chairman Cupp, Co-Chairman Patterson, and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education, thank you for the opportunity to come before you today to provide testimony on the upcoming biennial budget. My name is Matthew Ketcham and I am the Treasurer of the Madison-Champaign Educational Service Center.

Before I begin, I would be remiss if I did not take the opportunity to applaud and thank Co-Chairmen Cupp and Patterson along with their workgroup for the incredible amount of time and talents that were dedicated to the crafting of the Fair School Funding Plan. I have been witness to that dedication in the many conversations I have had with my colleagues serving on the committee. The end product is something that I believe can be a vital framework crucial to advancing school funding in the State of Ohio. Thank you.

I understand that you have heard testimony from Craig Burford, the Executive Director of the Ohio Educational Service Center Association, as well as others around funding proposals for Ohio's ESCs. I would like to take the opportunity to share with you a little about our ESC.

The Madison-Champaign Educational Service Center

The Madison-Champaign ESC is a smaller ESC serving 9 districts in Madison and Champaign Counties. The total number of students in our two-county area is just over 13,000 students. This year alone, our small, rural ESC has DIRECTLY served over 712 students in 1 alternative school classroom serving at-risk students, 2 classrooms serving students with autism, 10 preschool classrooms, 12 classrooms serving students with multiple disabilities, and 19 classrooms serving students with emotional disabilities. We also provide a number of related services and support services reaching hundreds of more students in our districts.

As you can see, at the core of the services that we provide to our districts as a smaller, more rural ESC is Special Education. Special Education services are often a quite expensive, but are crucial to the development of those children with special needs. We are currently serving a preschool student with autism in one of our school districts. Her name is Ruby. Ruby came to us with a number of needs. With the help of our teachers, therapists, and support personnel and their participation in the Autism Training Series, Ruby has made incredible strides. She is

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more engaged with whole group instruction, has become more social, and is on her way toward meeting her long term goal, being mainstreamed into a general education kindergarten classroom without the support of an aide.

Stories like that of Ruby or Andrew, a high school student in our LIFE transitions classroom who recently received our ESC's STAR Student Award for his exemplification of our ESC's tenants of excellent Customer Service, are the true measures of the importance of the work which ESCs do every day.

In order for us to provide the high quality services that our districts have come to expect from us, the Madison-Champaign ESC employs 300 individuals and operate on a \$15M budget. We pay and maintain benefits for those 300 regular employees along with a number of substitutes, operate 44 classrooms, provide related services, professional development, and curricular services, and provide a number of other supports. To operate, our ESC only receives about \$340,000 in funding. That amount is down nearly \$80,000 in the last 5 years and down nearly \$115,000 from when I started at the ESC in FY2006. All of this while costs continue to rise and expectations continue to steepen.

Each year, Educational Service Centers across the state are required to submit an application to be considered a high-performing ESC. We are required to choose five primary service areas and demonstrate savings to the districts we serve in those areas. In the application process at the beginning of this year, our ESC was able to demonstrate a 20.48% cost savings over the five service areas we selected. This amounted to over \$1.15M in savings. Overall, ESCs were able to show a 33.74% savings or \$63.9M.

The Madison-Champaign ESC, along with a number of other ESCs across the state, have positioned ourselves to be able support our districts around multiple core areas of education providing them with curricular support and teacher professional development that we believe will help to advance their test and report card results.

Through the leadership of Dr. Dan Kaffenbarger, the Superintendent of the Madison-Champaign ESC, our mission statement was created and we live by that mission. It is referenced at the top of each page of this document; "We Work to Serve". We will serve the needs of others, exemplify great teamwork, display positive attitudes, and provide reliable service to the staff and students in the districts of Madison and Champaign Counties and beyond.

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In order to advance our agency, serve the students in Madison and Champaign Counties, and continue to save our districts money, we support the recommendations of the Ohio Educational Service Center Association as outlined.

OESCA's Budget & Policy Recommendations

We encourage the Ohio General Assembly to build upon the Administration's proposal by adopting the following funding and funding-related policy proposals:

- Increase the ESC per pupil operating subsidy to \$42.52 over four years.
- Create a process to review and recalibrate the ESC operating subsidy every four years.
- Develop a uniform, consistent and standardized methodology for reporting ESC operating expenditures for implementation beginning in FY 2021.
- Earmark funds for ESCs to provide targeted support for: effective teachers and principals, standards and curriculum, accountability and report cards, educator preparation, student transition services, well-child initiatives and other state priorities and hold ODE accountable for using ESCs as directed in temporary law.
- Leverage Federal Funding with ESC Operating Subsidy and other funds to maximize service levels.
- Ensure ESCs are eligible to apply for Federal and State grants on behalf of client school districts.
- Ensure ESCs are eligible for facilities funding with a focus on capital improvements to ESC facilities that provide direct student services.
- Ensure ESCs are eligible to participate in the Ohio Medicaid School Plan (MSP).

I believe that an investment in Educational Service Centers will accomplish two main objectives. An investment in ESCs will provide for continued high quality service while allowing us increased responsiveness to our districts and to the State. I also believe that an investment in ESCs will allow us to provide increased economies of scale and shared services that will ultimately save our district money in the long run. As Craig Burford referenced in his testimony on Monday, **for every \$1 in combined state/local funds, ESCs provide \$5.91 in additional resources through combined savings and grants.**

Thank you again for the opportunity to address you today and for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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