



**Senate Education Committee
Senate Bill 110 Testimony
Ohio School Boards Association
Buckeye Association of School Administrators
Ohio Association of School Business Officials
April 9, 2019**

Chairwoman Lehner, Vice Chair Terhar, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the Senate Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today regarding Senate Bill (SB) 110. I am Jennifer Hogue, director of legislative services for the Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA). Joining me today for this testimony and in answering your questions are Barbara Shaner, representing the Ohio Association of School Business Officials and Thomas Ash with the Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA).

Our organizations represent public school district boards of education, superintendents, treasurers/CFOs, business managers, and other school business officials from around the state. Our members have a keen interest in the provisions included in SB 110.

We could stand before you all day and talk about the pitfalls of House Bill (HB) 70 and the damage it has done to the communities of Youngstown and Lorain. What has occurred in these communities under the current academic distress commission law has not been helpful for improving these districts nor the outcomes for the students they serve.

Our organizations have been talking with policymakers over the past few years to discuss the need for change: the need to restore the community's representation through their locally elected board; the need to bring accountability for the CEO; and the need to improve outcomes for students in these districts and those students who will follow.

Currently the state has three academic distress commissions: Youngstown, Lorain, and East Cleveland. Looking at the most recent report card results, Dayton City Schools could join them in September of this year if their report card does not show improvement. Additionally, in 2020 we could see an additional nine districts subject to academic distress commissions: Ashtabula, Canton, Columbus, Euclid, Lima, Mansfield, North College Hill, Painesville, and Toledo. We urge you to make changes to the academic distress commission law that will benefit these districts and the students they serve.

In our conversations with policymakers, it appears everyone is in agreement about the need to make changes, but disagreement still exists on what those changes should include. We appreciate the move in SB 110 toward restoring more community voice with additional appointments for the mayor, but would prefer to see more involvement and control from the locally elected board and existing administration. If any changes from state intervention are to be lasting and permanent, they need to involve the local board and administration from the onset. We do support the bill's additional accountability for the CEO through annual audits from the Auditor of State, performance evaluations for the CEO, and quarterly progress reports to the board.

Ultimately, our organizations prefer to see an end to academic distress commissions and instead replace them with a system of partnership, support, and intervention to create lasting, sustainable change. We prefer that any system of support that the state adopts focus on building-level performance and building-level changes rather than the district level as under current law.

We are more than happy to continue working with the bill's sponsor and the committee to reach a solution for struggling districts and the students they serve. We believe that this topic requires a robust conversation that explores all of the proposed solutions contained in this bill as well as in HB 127, HB 154, and HB 166.

Thank you for your time and attention. We would be happy to answer any questions you might have at this time.