



Toledo Public Schools
Educational Campus
Office of Curriculum and Instruction
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Mission: Toledo Public Schools' mission is to produce competitive college and career ready graduates through rigorous curriculum across all grade levels by implementing Ohio's new learning standards with fidelity.

Vision: To be an 'A-rated' school district whose graduates are college and career ready.

June 12, 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 the Academic Distress Commission proposals being considered for inclusion in Am. Sub. House Bill (HB) 166. I am Jim Gault, Executive Transformational Leader of Curriculum and Instruction for Toledo Public Schools.

In my position, I closely watch the work of Urban districts across our great state and across the country. I have heard of the terrific work that is happening in Pittsburgh Public Schools where graduation rates have improved from 70% to 80% over the past four years. This ten-point growth has turned the nation's eye to Pittsburgh to see what they are doing to move the needle for student achievement.

Yet in Toledo, Ohio our graduation rate has improved 15% from 64% to 79% for all students, 60% to 80% (20% growth) for African-American students, from 59% to 77% (18% growth) for economically disadvantaged students and from 54% to 70% (16% growth) for students with disabilities. Instead of praise and adulation from our legislatures and recognition from the Ohio Department of Education, Toledo Public Schools receives the grade of an F and is looking down the barrel of the Academic Distress Commission and losing local control of our district. Though we are not satisfied until all students graduate college and career ready, we are extremely proud of our progress and will continue to work our plan with laser-beam focus.

In comparison, House Bill 70 was passed by the legislators in the state of Ohio in 2015 establishing the Academic Distress Commission. Youngstown Public Schools became the first district to move from local control to state control. Since that time, four-year graduation rate has decreased from 75.5% to 74.4%. Yet Youngstown taxpayers and voters have no voice to change this dynamic since the local, elected school board has no control.

The Third Grade Guarantee is another obstacle that students and parents face due to legislature. Regardless of grades, student discipline, or attendance, students must reach the Third Grade Promotional Score in order to move to the fourth grade. Toledo Public Schools has increased the number of students reaching this score from 71.9% to 85% since 2015. This progress has provided thousands of students to move successfully to the next grade level yet does not factor into a district's grade card formula, as it carries no point total to determine the K-3 Literacy component and Overall Grade Card of a district or school.

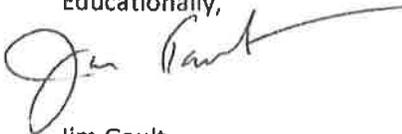
Though progress is occurring, Toledo Public Schools is determined to ensure that all students graduate college and career ready. Preliminary results show that nearly 50% of the students in grades K-3 who were off-track are moving to on-track from the previous year as measured by NWEA MAP.

English Learners growth targets have increased from 42% to 63% scoring proficient or making demonstrated growth as measured by the OELPA tests for the 2018 -2019 school year. These at-risk students will continue to improve English acquisition and move towards proficiency.

Despite receiving an Overall Grade Card score of an F, the Toledo Community is TPS Proud of the changes that are occurring in Toledo Public Schools. Enrollment has increased by over 1,700 students in the past three years. Over 600 students earned college credit last year while enrolled in high schools. Honors Diplomas have increased from 23 to over 100 in the past three years. Voters have seen the growth that is occurring in Toledo Public Schools and recently demonstrated their support with two levy approvals at nearly 70%.

I strongly ask that you pass HB 154 and end the Academic Distress and take your time in creating a system that promotes growth and holds local school boards and educators accountable for achievement. By creating an accountability system that is fair and equitable to all populations and working with local school districts, we can develop an education system that we can all be proud of.

Educationally,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Gault", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jim Gault

Executive Transformational Leader of Curriculum and Instruction