

Testimony of Jim Brady, Superintendent
Fayetteville-Perry Local School District

Before the Ohio House of Representatives Higher Education Subcommittee of the Finance Committee

Chairman Duffey, Ranking Member Ramos, and Members of the Higher Education Subcommittee, my name is Jim Brady. I am the Superintendent of Schools for the Fayetteville-Perry Local School District located in Brown County, Ohio. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you on the important topic of College Credit Plus and how this well-intended process can have a significant financial and staffing impact on a small rural school district such as ours. The Fayetteville-Perry Local School District has a student enrollment of 893 students; 181 of these students come to the District under open enrollment. The District has consistently scored well on the state tests and provides a quality education, and it has been the large number of open enrollment students that has helped keep us afloat financially. We are currently on the guarantee by \$21k and were the recipient of an anticipated funding increase from H.B. 64 of \$1,409 total for the next two years. Our state share per student is \$3,150 per student so when a student takes full advantage of the 120 hours of College Credit Plus, with a maximum of \$5,900, this ends up costing us an additional \$2,750 per student from an already depleted general fund.

As a small district with three very accessible colleges near us, our College Credit Plus enrollment percentage has consistently grown and continues to grow. Of the approximate 300 high school students, there were 44 high school and 2 middle school students who participated in College Credit Plus this year. For our April 1st sign-up for the 2016-17 school year, there are 69 high school (23.39%) and 7 middle school students signed up to participate. As the District starts to lose these students, it becomes difficult to offer upper-level classes such as Calculus, Physics, and Honors English. We cannot just reduce our teacher numbers, because the 69 students are spread across four different grades. We lose higher numbers of Juniors and Seniors, but we are starting to see more Freshman and Sophomore students leave our campus to participate. We cannot just cut one teacher to meet the reduced demand, causing classes to become smaller and the community to ask why our teachers have only 15-18 students in a class.

This creates a challenge from a budgeting standpoint for a fiscally strapped district that just went to the voters with an operating levy for the first time since 1979. The challenge our Treasurer had with her forecasting was knowing she needed to allocate resources to pay for FY15 and incurring the FY16 cost by having to pay the post-secondary payment from the previous year (\$82,940) and an additional projected (\$120,000) for this current year. During the levy campaign the community was informed that one of the reasons we needed money was a result of the PSEO/CCP "double payment" we were scheduled to make this year. As of today, there has not been a College Credit Plus charge yet to materialize, putting the Treasurer in a predicament of how does she end this year and what will she need to pay for next? This makes her five-year forecast anything but correct. If we had sufficient funds and we did not try to pass a levy in March, this would not have been such a burden. It also created a poor perception in the community with regards to our forecast and the need for a levy. Our March levy results were 75% against and 25% for.

Presently we have one full-time College Credit Plus-certified teacher on staff, although there are teachers who see the writing on the wall and realize the need to become certified. To do this requires more money, and in the end they do not necessarily receive more pay. Many of them are teachers who entered the profession to be high school teachers — not college instructors. One of our local colleges applied for the collaborative Pathway One grant that could have provided potential scholarships to teachers to take the extra coursework required. That college did not receive the grant.

I find it odd that our teachers would not receive some type of stipend from the college for teaching the course on our campus, or even free tuition to obtain the required classes. The District is supplying the classroom, technology, and supplies, as well as paying the utilities and providing the students. I truly do not get the concept of a zero financial investment from the college. The college is also the organization that provides the entrance testing, where in years past, the student needed a minimum of a 3.0 in the subject area in which they were to take the college course, which encouraged getting good grades. We have, in some instances, had students obtain their associate's degree before they received their high school diploma. There is a benefit of keeping a student on their rolls after high school, and the state is benefiting by keeping the student in Ohio. They are not only staying in Ohio to complete their college degrees, but they are entering the work force in Ohio at a much earlier age.

As was mentioned earlier, we are projected to have a total of 76 students slated to participate next year. If 50% of these students were to take full advantage of College Credit Plus and took 120 hours over the next four years, we would be billed for (38 x \$5,900) \$224,200. The state share amount we would receive to educate these students at \$3,150 each would be \$119,700. This comes to a net loss from the general fund of \$104,500. to a district that is already in deficit spending. Even the current floor rate of \$40 per credit hour is a substantial cost to the district, but the colleges receive \$40 to capture processing and administrative costs associated with transitioning a College Credit Plus student.

I understand this is a well-intended program that provides great opportunities to the families of this district. I would hope that the committee can find a way to fund the extra course work required for a teacher to obtain certification and the mandate of absorbing the cost of tuition and books for students participating.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for this opportunity to testify, and I will address any questions from the committee at the pleasure of the chair.