



Belpre City School District

2014 Rockland Avenue, Belpre, Ohio 45714

(740) 423-9511 ♦ FAX (740) 423-3050

Tony Dunn – Superintendent

Missy Griffith – Treasurer

Higher Education Subcommittee

House Bill 474

Written Testimony Provided By:

Tony Dunn, Superintendent, Belpre City Schools

May 17, 2016

Chairman Duffey, Ranking Member Ramos, and subcommittee members, please allow me to present this written testimony regarding House Bill 474 and some of the provisions of the current College Credit Plus Legislation.

I am the Superintendent of Belpre City Schools, a small school district in Washington County, Ohio with approximately 1060 students from Kindergarten through 12th grade. Within our school population, almost sixty percent (60%) of our students receive either free or reduced lunches. We are able to serve free breakfast to our entire student body, and it is much needed by most of them.

Belpre City Schools belongs to the Ohio Appalachian Collaborative (OAC), and along with twenty-six (26) other districts in the Collaborative, recently received a Straight A grant for creating dual enrollment opportunities for our students to earn college credit while remaining on our campus. Belpre students have traditionally participated in Post-Secondary Educational Opportunities (PSEO) and earned college credit either on the campus of our closest Institute of Higher Education (IHE) or on our high school campus. Within the Straight A grant are provisions for sustainability after the life of the grant. A hallmark of that sustainability was an agreement with several IHEs to provide tuition for college courses taken by our high school students, on our campuses, taught by our teachers, at \$0 per credit hour. While that arrangement may seem outrageous to the casual outsider with limited knowledge of school funding, it was negotiated with careful consideration by those IHEs who have full knowledge that they receive funds from the Ohio Department of Education for those students on top of the tuition charges. Indeed, we were assured that there was plenty of money to cover the administrative costs incurred by the IHE under those circumstances. Some of our districts had been teaching dual credit courses on their campuses, by their teachers for several years under this formula and had been making it work.

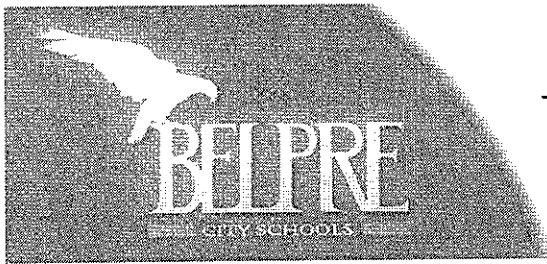
Then came College Credit Plus and the legislation that surrounded it and the rethinking of the agreements made during the process of applying for and receiving our Straight A grant. Introduced in this legislation was the “Floor” and “Ceiling” of tuition, \$40 and \$160, respectively, which were “suggested” in the legislation, but seen by some IHEs as the limits that were to be used by every IHE to “level the playing field.” Even though the terms of our grant specified that we would use the \$0 per credit hour formula, the new legislation gave the IHEs reason to rethink things and not follow through with their previously agreed to positions. This provided a devastating blow to the sustainability of our project and could eventually cause the sustainability deliverables to become impossible. Luckily, a change in leadership in one of our IHEs has resulted in a reconsideration of the original agreement and we are able to return to the \$0 per credit hour position for the 2016-17 school year. We respectfully ask for that arbitrary “Floor” to be removed from the legislation and allow

Belpre High School
612 Third Street
Belpre, Ohio 45714
740-423-3000

Board of Education

Robert Wallace, President
Fred Meredith, Vice-President
Brenda Church
Cathy O'Donnell
Leonard Wiggins

Belpre Elementary
2000 Rockland Avenue
Belpre, Ohio 45714
740-423-3010



Belpre City School District

2014 Rockland Avenue, Belpre, Ohio 45714

(740) 423-9511 ♦ FAX (740) 423-3050

Tony Dunn – Superintendent

Missy Griffith – Treasurer

IHEs and LEAs to determine the tuition cost without legislative restraints. It worked very well in the past and will continue to do so in the future if it is permitted.

Current CCP legislation states that students who are economically disadvantaged may not be charged the fees associated with a CCP class that they fail or withdraw from too late. This has been used by one local IHE as a marketing ploy to attract students to the CCP program without any accountability for the student or family. Most districts have policies that provide for the repayment of costs associated with a failed class and this helped the students better understand the gravity of the college-level course and responsibility of staying focused on being successful in the class. Unfortunately, there is no requirement of the IHE to communicate with the home high school and the parents of the student when a high school student is in danger of failing a class. Indeed, most of the time the school and parents only found out about difficulties in the class when the student received a transcript. This is much too late to intervene in a helpful way. I am asking that the legislature address these two issues by developing a system that would establish a level of financial responsibility for parents that emphasizes the need for them to help the student maintain passing grades when taking CCP classes. I would also ask that a system of reporting to the home high school and the parents be developed that would require the college professor or the IHE to alert the school and the parents that a student is in danger of failing a CCP class in enough time to assure a meaningful intervention. Just this fall semester, Belpre High School had two high school seniors who failed classes at our closest IHE. One student failed sixteen (16) hours and the other failed three (3) hours, and, since neither are classified as Economically Disadvantaged, both must repay the district for the costs associated with those classes. Neither we, as the school district, nor the parents were aware that either student was experiencing difficulties in the classes. Both need the credits for graduation. The current policy begs for a uniform standard for determining college readiness and the input from local high schools and parents as equal partners in the education of this vulnerable population. Clearly, larger things are at risk here than simply failing a course. High school graduation is a main goal for high school students. The fact that they can accomplish college credit as a high school student is a wonderful bonus for students and families, but we must not lose sight of that final goal of high school graduation.

Another pressing issue with CCP legislation is the cost of and input into the selection of classroom textbooks for our CCP classes. IHEs have complete control over which textbooks are used for CCP classes and for how long those textbooks are used, even though the home school district is responsible for purchasing those books. This practice illuminates a distinct lack of collaboration that is inherent in the relationship between some IHEs and LEAs. There needs to be some uniform policy that requires input from both parties for textbooks used in CCP classes.

I appreciate this opportunity to express my concerns to this Subcommittee and would be happy to answer any questions you may have or collaborate with you to resolve some or all of the issues surrounding College Credit Plus. My email address is bc_tdunn@belpre.k12.oh.us and my office telephone number is 740-423-9511. Thank you for helping us ensure that students and local school districts can succeed.

Board of Education

Robert Wallace, President
Fred Meredith, Vice-President
Brenda Church
Cathy O'Donnell
Leonard Wiggins

Belpre High School
612 Third Street
Belpre, Ohio 45714
740-423-3000

Belpre Elementary
2000 Rockland Avenue
Belpre, Ohio 45714
740-423-3010