

Good evening Chairman and Honorable Representative Cupp and thank you for allowing me this opportunity to speak with the Ohio House of Representatives Finance Sub Committee for Primary and Secondary Education on behalf of Fairborn Digital Academy in Fairborn, Ohio. My name is Dottie Meade, and I just became the Executive Director for Fairborn Digital Academy on August 1, 2014. I had been a member of their Board of Directors for 8 years prior to this year, and I have found FDA to be a conversion school with a tremendous success rate while paying close attention to financial responsibilities to our public.

Fairborn Digital Academy is an on-line dropout recovery school and has been in existence for 12 years. I am here tonight to share my concerns with some of the language in House Bill 2 and House Bill 64. In House Bill 2, lines 506-520 state that the community school data will be combined with their sponsor school data. I ask you to understand how detrimental that would be for us to determine our success. While we are sponsored by a local school district, we are still two separate schools functioning in different ways, especially when the community school is a drop-out recovery school. In the case of a drop-out recovery school, the reporting system and grade card is different than that of a traditional school. Combining the data from the two schools would result in inaccurate and misleading data. While the sponsoring district is responsible for oversight, the community school must be able to run the school as they believe is best, which would not necessarily happen if the data for both schools were combined in a single district reporting.

In House Bill 2, lines 1384 - 1396 state that the sponsor cannot sell services to schools they sponsor. This certainly defeats the states direction of shared services. When a conversion school shares services with their sponsoring school, the cost is decreased for both districts.

In House Bill 64, sponsoring schools are prohibited from selling any goods or services to their sponsored conversion school. This prohibits the consolidation of services. Our sponsor helps to keep our costs down by providing goods and services, helping to maintain oversight and provide low costs.

Regarding the testing timelines laid out for our students, please keep in mind that students in a drop-out recovery school are not all at the same place in the curriculum at any given time during the year. Students still taking the OGT's along with the AIR tests and the NWEA MAP assessments will be tested for a total of 35 hours. Students taking the PARCC Math and English and the AIR American History and Government along with the NWEA MAP assessments will be testing over 21 hours. In either case, drop-out recovery schools are required to take the MAP tests. The real concern that we have with the testing requirements is that it not only cuts drastically into instruction time, but it also allows us very little time to run the assessments we have deemed important to help our students succeed. We have been forced to stop using assessments we found were most helpful in accumulating individual data usable by our accountability coaches in guiding students to be successful.

We have found that our students have over a 75% passage rate for OGT's if they participate in a test prep course. This course is a proven success model for our students. Again, please keep in mind that our students are primarily in jeopardy of dropping out of school for lots of different reasons. Some of our students are in trouble with the law and have been removed from their home school district. Some of our students have health issues and cannot be in school on a regular basis and are therefore in jeopardy of being a truant problem. Some of our students are parents and school attendance at a bricks and mortar building is not a priority when they have no one to watch their child. Some of our students are the bread winners in their families and again,

being in school is not a priority when they need to put food on their tables.

We understand that your purpose for making some of these changes is to keep all community schools accountable. But some of the language in House Bill 2 and House Bill 64 will devastate smaller conversion schools. Fairborn Digital Academy has been in existence for 12 years, and each year more students received diplomas. Last year, 53 students received diplomas who would not have otherwise graduated. Fairborn Digital Academy is a successful community school. Please take some time to carefully think about how the wording in these two bills will devastate small community/conversion schools like Fairborn Digital Academy.