

Education and Career Readiness Committee

Tuesday, January 30, 2018

Testimony on House Bill 438

William J. Koran, Superintendent, Educational Service Center of Medina County

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Slaby, Ranking Minority Member Fedor, and members of the Ohio House Education and Career Readiness Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB 438.

I am William Koran and I have been associated with the Educational Service Center of Medina County since February of 1992, and have served as the superintendent since January of 2001.

During this time I have seen the scope of responsibilities for Educational Service Centers move from the Regulatory Agencies of the County Boards of Education from the 1990s, to the Educational Service Centers of today. When I began with the ESC, the focus of our work was to serve our local school districts. Since that time we have been allowed and encouraged to become much more entrepreneurial, and to treat our exempted village and city school districts the same as our local school districts.

This has taken place across Ohio, but at the same time, the governance of Educational Service Centers has not allowed representation from these newly served school districts. In Medina County two thirds of my staff and an equal two thirds of my revenue are generated by the three city school districts located in Medina County. Every two years I am asked by residents from those school districts if they can run for the Governing Board of the Educational Service Center. Unfortunately, I have to tell them that the law does not allow for that at this point in time.

House Bill 438 provides for a single County Educational Service Center Governing Board to develop a plan to remedy that situation. By allowing an elected Governing Board to appoint up to four new members from unrepresented entities, this will allow additional districts to have a voice in the governance of the Educational Service Center that serves their districts. Each county that would be affected by this bill has a different demographic makeup through its combination of city, local and exempted village school districts. Consequently, every plan will be different.

House Bill 438 also allows a local school district that transferred its territory from an Educational Service Center to another Educational Service Center prior to 2011 to return its territory back to its original ESC. In Medina County, the Black River School District was a member of the Medina County Board of Education and Educational Service Center from 1914 until 2006. In 2006, Black River moved to the Tri-County Educational Service Center and then returned to Medina County in 2014.

Due to the fact that Black River was a member of the Tri-County Educational Service Center in 2011, its territory has been frozen with that Educational Service Center, even though they receive all of their services from Medina County.

Passage of HB 438 will allow Black River and other districts throughout Ohio to return to the ESC that currently serves them.

I have had inquiries from Black River residents who wished to run for my Governing Board in this past election, but were surprised that they were only eligible to run for the Tri-County Board. This bill will rectify that situation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today, and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.