

JAMES L. LLOYD, Ed. D.
Superintendent

EMILY C. DALES
Treasurer/CFO

KELLI E. COGAN, M. Ed.
Assistant Superintendent

TIMOTHY J. ATKINSON
Director of Business Affairs

SHANNON M. GOSS, Ph. D., NCSP
Director of Student Services

JAMES J. TATMAN, M. Ed.
Director of Human Resources

Olmsted Falls City School District

26937 BAGLEY ROAD
P.O. BOX 38010
OLMSTED FALLS, OHIO 44138-0010

(440) 427-6000
FAX (440) 427-6010

www.ofcs.net



March 5, 2018

Dear Chairman Blessing, III; Vice Chair Reineke, Rep. Faber, Rep. Ginter, Rep. Greenspan, Rep. McColley, Rep. Pelanda, Rep. Seitz, Rep. Smith, Rep. Clyde, Rep. Johnson, Rep. Kennedy-Kent and Rep. Sweeney,

My name is Dr. Jim Lloyd and I am the superintendent for the Olmsted Falls City School District which is located in southwestern Cuyahoga County. Unfortunately I am unable to be physically present at the scheduled hearing for proposed Ohio House Bill 512. I write to you with significant, fundamental concerns related to the contents of this bill.

Fundamental to our great country's government operations is the concept of the separation of power. While our founding fathers recognized that concentrated power would have had an impact on our country's ability to act quickly, they had some very poor experiences working with a particular individual from a foreign land who operated quickly in an arbitrary and capricious manner. These actions led to a revolution and the founding of a country. While tempting, concentrating power into a single person's hands for the sake of operating efficiently has never been a good idea. Government should be limited, not emboldened and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

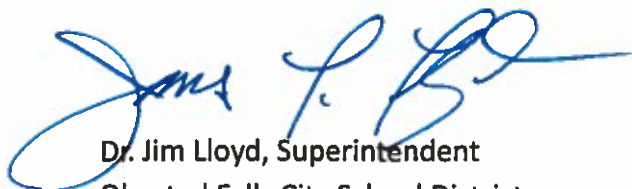
Ohio House Bill 512 transfers nearly all of the duties and authority of the State Board of Education and the superintendent of public instruction into a new state agency with far too much power. Doing so removes the avenues that are currently in place to allow for input from students, parents, teachers, administrators, schools, school districts, superintendents and local school board members. While it may appear to create a system that may be more efficient, it abandons the fundamental principles of representative government. Moreover, it further exacerbates the concern that educational decisions will be be politically motivated with very little public input.

My fellow superintendents throughout the State of Ohio have been strongly advocating for greater local control for quite some time; indeed Ohio's citizens have voiced a desire to have government remove itself from the day to day operation of public schools as evidenced by surveys that my district has conducted with our public, and those that the Ohio Department of Education has as well. While we recognize the need for a baseline of symmetry and structure within Ohio's public education system, we believe that leadership at the local level understands the system's needs best, and should therefore have the flexibility to operate accordingly. When the group of superintendents and Ohio Senator Huffman made significant progress with proposed Ohio Senate Bill 216, it encouraged those of us at the local level that we were indeed being heard. House Bill 512 represents a significant step backwards. It is the opposite of deregulation and represents the creation of a very powerful government controlled position.

Ultimately public schools (and public universities) do not need government to assume control for us, or of us. We need the Ohio General Assembly to engage us, empower us, communicate, collaborate, and problem-solve with us. Finally, once that vision has been set, we need them to get out of the way so that the people who have been hired to implement can indeed do just that. While some would criticize the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio State School Board (and I have been personally outspoken); the nearly powerless system within which both groups operate is a structure that has been in place for a while. The Ohio General Assembly and the Governor's office have controlled public education in Ohio for over two decades by creating accountability laws and piling on more standardized tests. We've been given test-based accountability, a broken high school graduation system, a failed funding model and a host of other things that simply have not worked. Trusting full educational power and decision making to a group that does not have a very good track record of making good decisions is a very bad idea.

Students, schools and communities are best served when decisions are made at the local level and supported by state and federal entities. We need limited government, not more government. Proposed Ohio House Bill 512 completely violates this principle.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dr. Jim Lloyd, Superintendent
Olmsted Falls City School District