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Written Testimony on HB 49 to the House Finance Primary and Secondary
Education Subcommittee

Submitted by: Ann Brennan, Executive Director
Ohio School Psychologists Association
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Thank you, Chairman Cupp, Ranking Member Miller and members of the subcommittee for this opportunity to provide written testimony on HB 49. I am Ann Brennan, executive director of the Ohio School Psychologists Association. Our association represents over 900 school psychologists **working in Ohio's** schools. School psychologists are highly trained in the multi-layered area of educational assessments, including: selecting which diagnostic assessments are best to use to determine a student's academic level and progress, assisting school-based evaluation teams in interpreting assessment results, and using the data gleaned from assessments to both design interventions and monitor the progress students are making during the intervention period. School psychologists also have expertise in assessing school climate-related issues and designing school-based behavioral health intervention plans for buildings, as well as for individuals and groups of students.

Before focusing on a few of the many important education-related provisions in **HB 49, I would first like to express OSPA's appreciation for the continued state** funding of the school psychology intern program, included as a special education enhancement. This program is vital to the Ohio school psychology profession as it supports the ODE-approved school psychology training programs by funding the intern placements in school districts. We are again experiencing shortages of school psychologists in many parts of the state. The university training programs address these shortages by working in their geographic regions to determine where the unmet needs are, and then working with school districts to encourage them to become an approved intern site.

We would like to focus our comments on the following:

- ESC funding: OSPA supports increasing the ESC operating subsidy in the state budget (200500 line item) to the current funding level of \$41.6 million. ESCs provide valuable services to school districts, especially in the areas of special education and gifted education. They do so under an efficient and effective service delivery system. A budget cut of this magnitude would certainly impact on their ability to provide much needed



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services at a time when special education-related staffing shortages are becoming more acute. OSPA also supports the recommendation of OESCA to maintain the ESC state subsidy as unrestricted aid.

- Special education preschool funding: OSPA supports the recommendation of OCECD to assure that special education preschool per-pupil funding fully fund both half-day and full-day preschool programs.
- Gifted education funding: OSPA supports the recommendation of OAGC to require that gifted state funding be spent on gifted education services.
- Teacher externship requirement: OSPA supports the recommendations of both the OEA and OFT to remove this required provision from HB 49. We agree this would be unduly burdensome for teachers and believe there are sufficient existing partnerships for sharing professional knowledge between the business and school community.

Thank you for considering our views.

Ann Brennan, Executive Director
Ohio School Psychologists Association