**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF RESTORED FUNDING
FOR OHIO'S EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY CENTERS**

I'm Gary Greenberg, Director of Educational Technology for Public Media Connect – CET and Think^{TV} and Chair of the Ohio Ed Techs.

Since 1967, Ohio's Educational Technology Centers —Ohio's Ed Techs—have served the professional development needs of teachers and administrators related to educational technology, in partnership with Ohio's educational television stations and the Ohio Department of Education. Ohio's Ed Techs provide support and instruction about effective and meaningful application of technology in the classroom to improve student learning. Ohio's Ed Tech services are critical to helping educators meet the needs of 21st century learners.

For the 2018-2019 biennium, the Ohio Ed Techs goal is to restore operational funding to $1,778,879 annually.

JUSTIFICATION
Fluency with technology is a requirement of most careers in Ohio, as well as a must for college success. Yet a recent national survey reveals that one-third of teachers report **lack of training** as the biggest barrier to technology use in their classrooms (Rebora, 2016). **Without instruction in technology use, the equipment schools purchase for teaching and learning just sits— in classrooms and in closets.**

The Ohio Ed Techs offer professional development on teaching and learning with technology to teachers, administrators and school district staff in every corner of the state to address the training issue. These services—all at subsidized rates and some free of charge— include:

- Single day and multi-day workshops for school staff members;

- Hardware and software operation and application in the classroom;

- Continuing education and university credit;

- Regional conferences, including the Ohio Educational Technology Conference;

- Consulting services regarding instruction, curriculum, hardware and software.

In 2015 and 2016, we reached **over 46,000 teachers and staff with 133,000 hours of technology instruction**. If we assume 20 students per classroom, that amounts to **over 920,000 students** affected in two years.

The impact of the above services shows up as change in local school districts. In a statewide project covering online testing:

- 68% of participants left with a strategy for helping their students learn the necessary technology skills;
- 87% planned to have students try out one or more new activities within thirty days, and;
- 85% planned to share what they learned with colleagues at their next staff meeting.

LOSS OF SERVICE DUE TO BUDGET REDUCTION

The Ohio Ed Techs suffered a $751,000 annual reduction in state support in the FY16-17 biennium, amounting to a 42 percent reduction in each center's funding. These reductions in support caused real reductions in professional development services to Ohio school districts, resulting in **10,000 fewer contact hours of instruction** for teachers and administrators in FY16.

What those figures don't reveal are the **requests for services from individual districts that could not be filled** in our service areas:

In Bowling Green, staff cuts resulted in 2,250 fewer teachers trained for an annual loss of 2,400 teacher-hours of professional development. NWOET's reduced support to regional and state educator events resulted in 1,400 fewer teachers in attendance.

In Kent/Akron/Canton, online and face-to-face professional development offerings fell 50 percent, reducing opportunities for 345 teachers to participate annually.

In Dayton and Cleveland, new course development on cutting-edge educational technology topics fell by 50 percent. This is a real problem with technology instruction, where tools and topics change rapidly.

Success in restoring funding to FY'14 levels will result in **bringing back those 10,000 hours of contact for teachers, administrators and staff around the state who did not receive them in FY'16.**

The Ohio Ed Techs propose to concentrate their services in the coming year in areas of need identified by the Ohio Department of Education. These areas include:
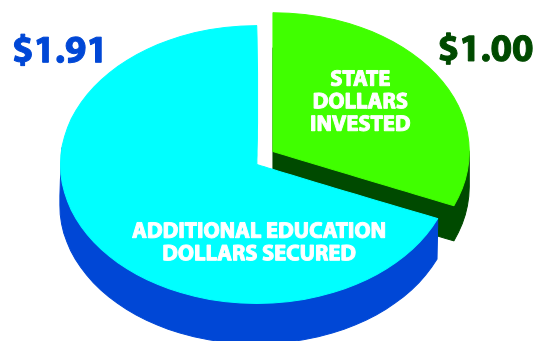
- **Teacher Professional Development Support**
  - Ohio Ed Techs regularly offer instruction on nearly 100 different topics supporting technology integration in the classroom.

- **School Improvement**
  - Recent professional development offerings in this area include Data Driven Assessment, Preparing Students for Success in Online Testing, Improving Reading

Comprehension, Enhancing the Curriculum with Project-Based Learning, and AIR Assessment and Online Testing.

- **Early Childhood Education Support**
  - Recent professional development offerings include INFOhio Resources to Support Early Learning, Early Childhood Resources to Support the Classroom, and Apps for Early Learners.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT IN OHIO'S ED TECH CENTERS

Ohio's investment in technology education has historically been a sound investment for Ohio taxpayers, **delivering a nearly 100 percent return in education dollars raised from all other sources and put to use in schools.** (Silva, 2015).

$1.91
$1.00
STATE DOLLARS INVESTED
ADDITIONAL EDUCATION DOLLARS SECURED

Restored funding also means that teachers, administrators and students across the state will learn to use technology more effectively at school and beyond school:

- **In Bowling Green,** it means the continued success of students taking online assessments, like the student who benefitted from NWOET's teacher workshops and passed his commercial driver's license exam to become an over-the-road trucker. That test was an online assessment, as are so many employer entrance exams in Ohio;

- **In Cincinnati**, the investment in technology training helps reading intervention teachers, who help young students learn to read, learning to navigate both print and online texts. Those teachers received technology coaching on tablets from CET in Cincinnati.

And throughout the state, it means that schools' recent investments in technology will be used year-round for teaching and learning—not just for testing. Educational technology will help teachers and students prepare for the future, and it won't be sitting unused.

Thank you, and I invite your questions.

References

Rebora, A. (2016, June 9). Teachers Still Struggling to Use Tech to Transform Instruction, Survey Finds - Education Week. *Education Week*. Retrieved from http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2016/06/09/teachers-still-struggling-to-use-tech-to.html?intc=EW-TC16-TOC

Silva, E. (2015, October 16). Station Activity Survey (SAS). Retrieved March 3, 2017, from http://www.cpb.org/stations/sas