



House Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education

March 21, 2017

Testimony of Tom Goodney, Superintendent, ESC of Central Ohio

Chairman Cupp, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the subcommittee, my name is Tom Goodney, Superintendent of the ESC of Central Ohio, and I wish to thank you for taking the time to read this testimony. The ESC of Central Ohio serves over 200,000 students and 25 school districts in Delaware, Franklin, Licking, Ross, and Union Counties.

Our agency provides expertise in shared services, professional development, leadership support, special education, dropout prevention/recovery, English language learners, and college and career services. We also offer communication/publications services, grant writing/administration, professional employment services, and fiscal agent/business services. Specifically, I wish to address the proposed 25% cut to the educational service center (ESC) state operating subsidy included in House Bill 49.

The proposed reduction to the state operating subsidy has the potential to compromise our ESC's internal capacity to deliver cost effective and quality programs and services to our client school districts as well as in support of the policy priorities of ODE. The state operating subsidy in conjunction with other earned revenue sources establishes a firm foundation to assemble and retain a strong ESC team of leaders and subject matter experts to oversee the effective implementation of a needs-based annual planning cycle that drives improved results for students and schools. This planning and implementation cycle results in customized programs and services for our client districts, schools and partner agencies. It enables us to work effectively with ODE officials to accelerate and advance state and regional policy priorities and targeted initiatives. As such, I would also ask that you also remove language in temporary law granting the state superintendent unprecedented authority in determining how the ESC operating subsidy should be spent; spending decisions are historically left to locally-elected governing boards.

With state policy makers in conjunction with the Ohio Department of Education and other state agencies pursuing a reform agenda under ESSA, adequate resourcing of ESCs is essential in Ohio's larger education policy context. Providing ESCs with a strong foundation of resources from which to build, sustain and grow their capacity provides for the effective design and delivery of programming and service in support of their client school districts. Perhaps more importantly, greater support of ESCs equals support for public education that is specifically designed and purposed to advance state policy initiatives for advancing educational outcomes for educators and students.

In my opinion, it is a prudent and wise investment.

Please reconsider the proposed 25% cut to the ESC state operating subsidy and retain ESC funding as unrestricted aid that can be used to provide tailored services. Thank you.