



South-Western City Schools

District Service Center

3805 Marlane Drive

Grove City, OH 43123

Phone: (614) 801-3000

Fax: (614) 801-3094

Testimony to the House Primary and Secondary Education Finance Committee
Bill Wise, South-Western City Schools, Superintendent
March 21, 2017

Chairman Cupp, Ranking Minority Member Miller and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee of Finance, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on HB 49 and the importance of restoring the state operating subsidy to educational service centers. My name is Bill Wise and I serve as the Superintendent with the South-Western City Schools in Franklin County.

As you are aware, current statute (ORC 3313.843) provides for the option of a school district with an ADM of more than 16,000 to enter into an agreement with an Educational Service Center to provide services to the district.

Currently the South-Western City School District enrolls and serves 21,647 students. Our Board of Education elected to enter into an agreement for services with the ESC of Central Ohio pursuant to ORC 3313.843 in May, 2014 and have benefitted from that decision in a variety of ways.

From my perspective, the primary benefit has been in the accessing economies of scale that our ESC provides in the programmatic areas of special education services, professional development, grant writing/administration, leadership development, and support for state initiatives such as OTES/OPES, mentor teachers, and the new counselor evaluation system.

In addition, the ESC of Central Ohio strategically leverages its state operating subsidy on behalf of all its client districts and maintains a cadre of educational and operational subject matter experts that are indispensable partners for our administrative team to collaborate with and utilize as we focus on our strategic objectives.

Currently, 72 ESC personnel work in conjunction with South-Western City personnel in delivering instruction and providing support services to our students. In 2016, South-Western City Schools saw 297 staff complete 2,725 contact hours of professional development through our ESC and its affiliated projects. Our ESC superintendent dedicates personnel to monitor our service relationship and annually facilitates a review of services provided and supports us in planning for the upcoming year. As you can see, the relationship we have our ESC is truly a partnership that we value.

With the implementation of ESSA requirements fast approaching, the need for additional resources is of concern to me. Providing our ESC with a strong foundation of resources from which to support our mission is of critical importance.

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 to our district. I would also ask that you remove language in temporary law granting the state superintendent unprecedented authority in determining how the ESC operating subsidy should be spent.

Thank you.