



Testimony Before Ohio Senate RE: SB 241 May 23, 2018

Good afternoon Chairwoman Lehner, Vice Chair Huffman, ranking member Sykes and members of the Senate Education Committee. My name is Troy McIntosh and I am the Head of School at Worthington Christian Schools in Worthington, Ohio. I am here in opposition to SB 241.

Worthington Christian Schools serves 920 in kindergarten through 12th grade and draws from almost 600 families across 5 counties. Our school was established in 1973 and claims 2500 alumni that now serve in vocations across the public and private spectrum in Ohio and around the world.

We are a 2016 National Blue Ribbon School in the Exemplary High Performance category. In each grade and subject area that this award recognizes, Worthington Christian aggregately scored in at least the 85th percentile or higher for all schools nationwide. The average composite ACT scores of our high school students are typically 15-20 percentile points higher than state averages. Nearly every one of our alumni pursue college and university level studies. The standardized tests that our elementary and middle school students take demonstrate that not only do they perform well above grade level and state averages, but a scoring metric which makes aggregate comparisons to their actual ability shows that they perform higher than their own ability would predict.

And yet we are not an elitist school. We draw from across the socio-economic spectrum. While we have students who come from wealthy families, 114 students – or 12% of our student population – attend our school on an EdChoice Scholarship. These students are thriving and being served and educated extremely well.

I have been at Worthington Christian Schools for 24 years, including five as head of school, although my first position out of college had me roaming these legislative halls as an LSC intern. During my time at WCS, I have served on various state committees, including the Fairness and Sensitivity Committee for the Ohio Achievement Assessments, the Governor's Digital Learning Task Force and the Ohio High School Athletic Association Board of Directors. I have also served as an AdvancEd and ACSI accreditation team chairperson and as a member of the ACSI Regional Accreditation Commission for seven years.

I am asking that SB be rejected as poor education and public policy for three reasons:

- 1) By establishing an arbitrarily tiered system of perceived quality, the state is taking on a market function rather than a governance function. This bill would clearly privilege one class of schools over another and unfairly position schools like ours in the market. It is the market alone, in other words, the citizenry of Ohio in search of schooling options for their children, and not the state, which ought to determine which schools are of higher quality than others. A state sanctioned imprimatur, especially one based upon arbitrary criteria like

this bill proposes, and with state benefits assigned to it, is unfair, unwise, and not a proper governmental function.

- 2) By requiring schools like Worthington Christian to maintain regulatory requirements that independent schools would not have to maintain would drain resources from our school that otherwise could go into student learning. This bill would allow those same resources to go toward student learning in independent schools. This uneven mandate would disadvantage every student at any school which chooses an accrediting body other than ISACS.
- 3) Assigning schools to a privileged tier based solely on its accreditation body is akin to assigning privilege based on the county in which a public school resides. Sure, some counties aggregately outperform other counties. But I'm sure you realize there are far too many variables involved to make such a sweeping determination that each of the schools in that county are more effective, and therefore deserving of certain privileges, than each school in other counties. While ISACS schools aggregately perform very well, and even higher in aggregate than schools in other accrediting bodies, it is a false conclusion to determine that each independent school is of higher quality than each school accredited by ACSI, the Catholic Conference of Ohio, or other organization which the state has already recognized as being a legitimate substitute for chartering standards. I would place my school, and many others, into the same performance category as independent schools. It makes no governing sense to privilege one school over another, particularly for such an arbitrary reason as its accrediting body.

For these reasons, I ask that this bill be allowed to die and not be moved out of committee or at least amended such that all accredited schools be similarly classified in the pilot program.

Chairwomen Lehner and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify as an opponent of SB 241.

At this time, I would be pleased to answer any questions.