Testimony before the Senate Finance Committee

June 1, 2017

Good morning Chairman Oelslager, Vice-Chair Manning, Ranking Member Skindell, and members of the Senate Finance Committee. My name is Geoffrey Andrews, CEO of the Management Council, which is the parent organization of INFOhio. I appreciate the opportunity to testify today on behalf of INFOhio, the Management Council of the Ohio Education Computer Network, our member Information Technology Centers, their client schools and districts, and in support of the information and education technology needs of the K-12 community in Ohio.

The Ohio Education Computer Network (OECN) is made up of regional data centers known as Information Technology Centers (ITC). I have included a statewide map of the sites in my written testimony. The Management Council optimizes activities among and on behalf of the OECN, and provides an array of services to the ITCs. The Management Council also supports ODE on several initiatives, including recently picking up the responsibility to coordinate EMIS training around the state.

Each ITC is a local governmental entity collectively owned and primarily funded by the school districts that receive technology services from that center. These technology services are numerous and performed on a large scale; I have provided a comprehensive list of services in the written testimony. For context, the OECN processes billions of dollars in payroll and payments for schools that the LSC just referenced; we handle millions of report cards, we provide all manner of EMIS and Internet support, and

we provide crucial electronic resources in support of the academic missions of the schools and students in Ohio.

As a collaborative of school districts, the ITCs offer these educational technology support services at significant savings to over 1000 school districts, community schools, ESCs, Career Tech Centers, and other K-12 entities in Ohio. The Management Council produces additional savings by optimizing capacities and purchases across the ITCs.

State funding in support of schools and ITCs comes from the Ohio Education Computer Network funding line 200-426. This line is currently proposed in sub HB 49 to be reduced from $16.2M to $15.9M. I am pleased to report that I am not here seeking any changes to this reduction; we continue to pursue efficiencies and cost-effective collaborations across the state, providing high quality services while reducing costs. Briefly, the $15.9M in line 426 is separated into three areas.

The first set aside, at $10M, is for network connectivity. This is largely sent from ODE to districts, community schools, stem schools, ESCs, and non-public schools. Over 4000 school buildings in Ohio are each allocated $1800 annually. To support the network, funds from 426 are also allocated to our partner, OARNET, for

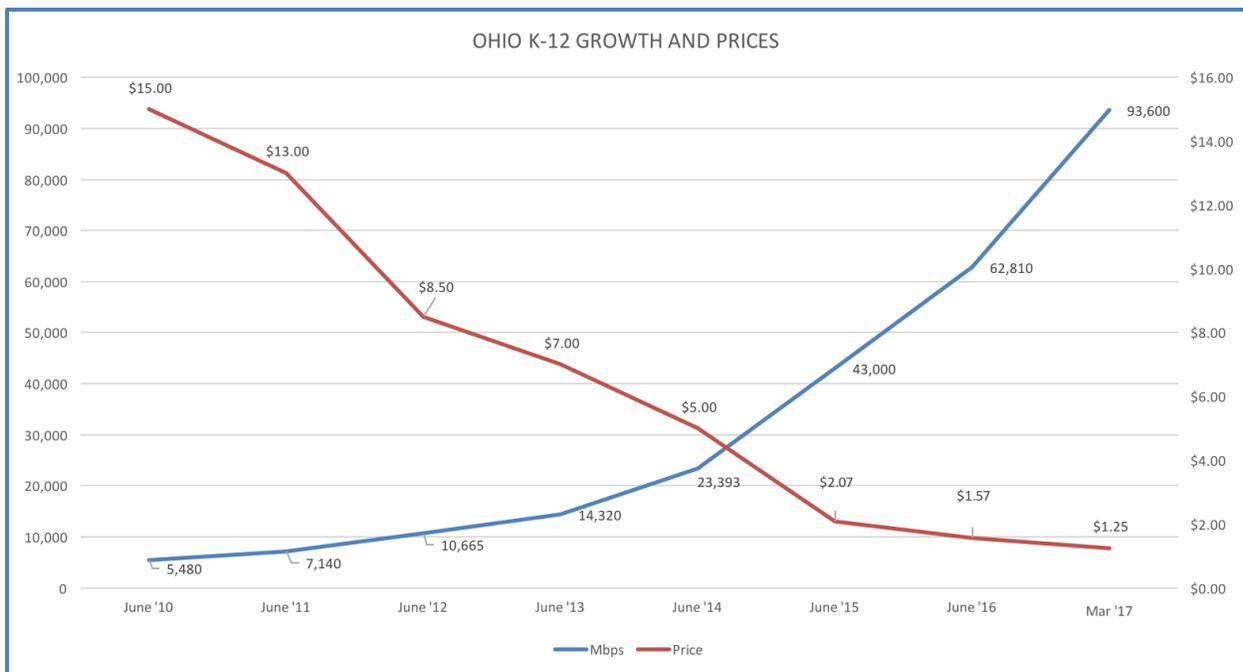| *Services provided to schools by Information Technology Centers:* |
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| • Class and student scheduling |
| • Grade reporting/Report cards |
| • Attendance and Discipline tracking |
| • Electronic grade books |
| • Parent access portals |
| • Library automation |
| • Digital learning resources covering PreK-12 across content areas |
| • Electronic databases that transcend career and college readiness |
| • Data analytics measuring student progress and program effectiveness |
| • Learning Management Systems |
| • Video Distance Learning that includes College Credit Plus access |
| • State Required EMIS reporting |
| • Special Education reporting |
| • Student Success dashboards |
| • Transportation routing |
| • Internet Access |
| • Internet 2 |
| • Telephone systems |
| • Network management, including wireless management to classrooms |
| • Service Management Software |
| • Document and forms management |
| • Email and spam filtering |
| • Network security |
| • Data storage and backup/recovery |
| • Web hosting |
| • Server and virtual server hosting |
| • Disaster Recovery |
| • CIPA (Internet Protection) |
| • State testing access and support |

network operations; for a disaster recovery facility supporting the ITCs; and for a service management business intelligence tool (think sophisticated help desk) that provides capabilities to ODE and ITCs.

The second set-aside in line 426, at $5M, funds ITCs directly to support the fiscal and student data reporting services they provide to schools. This makes up about 4-5% of the typical ITC budget; two decades ago the 426 line was much larger, constituting nearly 50% of ITC budgets.   ITCs are now largely funded by their owner school districts.

The remaining $.9M has traditionally been used by ODE as a partial source of funds to support development and maintenance of the state-owned school finance software package that the Auditor of State's office initiated in the late 1970s.

I wish to underscore the importance of the network support in line 426. In the written testimony I have included a graphic demonstrating the remarkable growth (and dependence) of Ohio's schools on state network and Internet resources.

OHIO K-12 GROWTH AND PRICES

In the graphic you will see that in the past 7 years, schools' monthly use of Internet through the ITCs has grown from 5 gigabits to nearly 100 gigabits (or 100,000 megabits) – almost 20 times – while the price

per megabit through the Ohio network has fallen from $15 to $1.25 (decreasing over 90%), and when one factors in eRate, there are schools in Ohio getting Internet access for a few pennies per megabit. This accelerating consumption of digital resources in Ohio's schools (such as those resources provided by INFOhio and the Management Council) demonstrates the important role technology plays in today's educational environment. This expanded network capacity also supports Ohio testing to move fully online for the first time this year.   And state support for this infrastructure enables local funds to be spent on computers and resources for students in the classroom.

This brings me to the second budget line I would like to address, and that is the 465 line, which is focused on Technology Integration and Professional Development. Until the last biennium, INFOhio, which is a division within the Management Council was funded through the 426 line. In 2015, ODE moved INFOhio to the 465 line, as INFOhio's role had evolved from a library automation provider to a robust professional development and digital resource provider for all the schools in Ohio. For context, INFOhio' digital resources are used 173,000 times per day in Ohio's schools.

Because of this evolution in INFOhio's role, the $2.5M that was allocated to INFOhio each year was moved from line 426 to line 465. However, this shift in 2015 was not well understood nor adequately conveyed. The reduction in line 426 was welcomed in the budget effort back then, of course, and happily assimilated into the biennium budget. However, the corresponding increase in line 465 was not understood as a shift from 426 - it was perceived as an increase and therefore drew negative attention. The $2.5M that had funded INFOhio in line 426 was reduced to $1.4M in line 465.

My testimony today on line 465 is focused on affirming the wisdom of your colleagues in the House, which has voted to restore the $1.1M that was inadvertently removed two years ago. This restoration of funds assures that a host of critical learning, instructional, and research resources will remain central

to the educational experience of Ohio's students. These include Bookflix and Storia, key tools that contribute significantly to meeting the Third Grade Reading Guarantee; EBSCO and World Book, which are vital to Career and College Readiness; and a litany of digital resources that will support student achievement on the new Mathematics and Language Arts standards. It also includes vital professional development resources to help Ohio's teachers pursue excellence. These resources are fundamental to addressing Ohio's stated goal of having 65% of the population earn postsecondary credentials by 2025. In my written testimony have included a more complete list of these resources.

Digital resources that can only be maintained through restored funding:
- BookFlix – integral to early reading
- Academic Search Premier
- Ancestry Library Edition
- Biography Reference Bank
- Consumer Health Complete
- Early World of Learning
- Explora
- Literary Reference Center
- Points of View Reference Center
- Science Online
- Science Reference Center
- Storia
- World Book

To appreciate the efficiency of our work, consider this: if all the schools in Ohio that currently receive these digital resources free of charge were to purchase these same digital resources on their own, the price tag would be over $50M, yet the Management Council and INFOhio procure these resources for $1.1M for all of Ohio's schools and children. That is essentially two cents on the dollar – a 98% discount for our schools. Remember, these resources are used 173,000 times a day by teachers and students in Ohio.

In closing, the Management Council, on behalf of the ITCs, the schools, and the students across Ohio is deeply appreciative of the opportunity to testify today, and I would be pleased to address any questions the committee members may have.