**Ohio Senate Hearing**

**Graduation Requirements**

**Testimony:**

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**Lima/Allen County Chamber of Commerce**

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State legislative leaders: Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding Ohio graduation standards/ Ohio Report Card. My name is Jed Metzger, I am the President/CEO of the Lima/Allen County Chamber of Commerce. We represent over 900 businesses; our mission is to grow, represent and enhance business growth and success.

The workforce challenge our region faces is typical of that faced by businesses across the state; we have many high-wage positions within our region into which high school graduates are hired through internship, apprenticeship or co-op pathways. Each of these pathways maintain high standards of rigorous learning that is crucial to the success of the individual, and to that of our businesses.

While we do want rigor in graduation requirements, there needs to be pathways to graduation.  Pathways for the college bound student and pathways for career tech/not college bound students.  We feel our regional businesses, members of the National Federation of Independent Business, be at the table to discuss the Ohio graduation standards and the Ohio Report Card.

Our regional taskforce conducted a survey of our members. I would like to share the results of the business survey that we sent out to our regional business members. I have attached both the Business Survey in regard to the Ohio graduation standards/Ohio Report Card and the Department of Education position. The taskforce is supporting the Ohio Department of education position. We support many components of Ohio Excels positions. The Department of Education attachment has been able to reflect the differences between the Ohio Department of Education position and Ohio Excels position.

The culminating experience in the ODE proposal encompasses everything in the Ohio Excels proposal and provides flexibility. We feel that this is key to supporting individual students and allows them to demonstrate proficiency of knowledge and skills in a variety of authentic ways. The ODE proposal allows for businesses to work with school districts in their region to create learning experiences for students and support workforce development. **This systematic change strengthens the high school experience and supports the workforce pipeline for Ohio Businesses.**