

Ohio Senate Primary & Secondary Education Subcommittee of Finance
Thursday, May 16, 2019

Testimony on Am. Sub. H.B. 166, the FY 2020-2021 Biennial State Operating Budget
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Chairman Terhar and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee of Finance, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on Am. Sub. H.B. 166, the FY 2020-2021 biennial state operating budget.

OESCA applauds Governor DeWine's child-focused budget proposal and efforts to insure all students have access to a high-quality education and educational support services. The executive budget proposal as introduced recognizes the role of ESCs by including provisions that:

- Provide ESCs relative funding stability;
- Leverage ESC capacity to deliver drug abuse prevention education professional development; and
- Designate ESCs as an eligible provider of services under the proposed student wellness and success funding.

These funding and policy proposals align to the historic strengths and expertise of Ohio's ESCs in providing quality educational support services to schools and we support the Administration's efforts to fund these priorities.

The Ohio House built upon this strong foundation by including language that does the following:

- Requires ODE to use a portion of GRF appropriation items Accountability/Report Cards, Educator Preparation, Academic Standards, Literacy Improvement and School Improvement to partner with ESCs to providing ongoing professional development, technical assistance and support.
- Requires ODE to submit an annual report to the General Assembly describing the manner in which the Department partnered with ESCs in the delivery of specified services for which state funding was provided to ESCs.
- Provides a role for ESCs in assisting students with FAFSA Completion Program.
- Clarifies that ESCs have the ability to apply for grants by recognizing ESCs as school districts for that purpose.
- Includes ESCs as eligible participants under the Ohio Medicaid School Plan.
- Exempts ESC services from competitive bidding under certain conditions.

We respectfully urge the Senate to retain these positive additions.

The House, however, did add a provision which we do not support. OESCA opposes language that would require a study of ESCs by the Joint Education Oversight Committee (JEOC) in partnership with ODE and the Auditor of State that includes a review of:

- Services provided
- Cost of existing services
- Ability to generate revenue for providing non-mandatory services and offset fixed costs w/ that revenue
- Average operating cost/pupil
- Effectiveness and efficiency of all ESCs

Why do we oppose this provision? Many of the required elements of the study are repetitive of past studies and current requirements under Ohio law and administrative rule. The proposed study is also duplicative to a study currently underway by the Auditor of State. Additionally, OESCA conducted a thorough review of ESC operating expenses and presented findings and recommendations in testimony to the Cupp-Patterson school funding working group in the House. For these reasons, we would ask the Senate to remove that language.

In closing, we encourage you to retain those provisions included in the House-passed version of the budget that serve to enhance the role of ESCs in partnership with the Ohio Department of Education and maximize the impact of the state's investments for students and schools. Why is this important? ESCs are high quality service providers ready to deliver needed programs and services – many of the very priorities outlined in the budget - to schools around the state immediately.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.