Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Burke, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee. My name is Adam Clark and I am the Executive Director of TRECA Digital Academy (TRECA). TRECA is a state-wide dropout prevention and recovery (DOPR) eschool, sponsored by Tri-Rivers Career Center. We have been in operation since 2001 and enroll nearly 2,800 students. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank the committee for its willingness to listen to DOPR schools throughout the state and make important changes in the state operating budget to ensure that DOPR schools can continue to serve Ohio’s most vulnerable students and assist them in becoming successful and productive members of society. The substitute budget bill accepted by this committee makes important clarifications to the high school assessment passage rate component on the DOPR report card.

ORC 3314.017(C)(2) outlines the high school assessment passage rate component on the DOPR report card. The law says the following:

*The percentage of twelfth-grade students currently enrolled in the school who have attained the designated passing score on all of the applicable state high school achievement assessments required under division (B)(1) or (2) of section 3301.0710 of the Revised Code and other students enrolled in the school, regardless of grade level, who are within three months of their twenty-second birthday and have attained the designated passing score on all of the applicable state high school achievement assessments by their twenty-second birthday;*

This section of code was written when students were required to take and pass the state’s OGTs in order to graduate. Nevertheless, students in the class of 2018 and later are required to take the seven end of course (EOC) exams. A “passing score” on an EOC exam is three points, which means a student must score a total of 21 points to meet the high school assessment passage rate component on the DOPR report card. Unfortunately, this 21 point standard is much higher than the 18 points a student must receive on the EOC exams to graduate. In other words, Ohio is holding DOPR schools to a higher standard than what it takes to graduate in Ohio.

Often, we are forced to ask students, who have met the 18-point requirement to graduate, to retake the EOC exams. Imagine, how hard it is to get a student, who knows he or she has met the requirements to graduate, to retake exams that have no impact on his or her academic success, only the school’s rating on a report card measure. To give you an idea of how large of a problem this is in the state, of the 66 DOPR schools receiving a High School Test Passage rating in 2017-2018, 48 failed to meet standards.

The House of Representatives worked to address this in their version of HB 166. While language was included in ORC 3314.017 to resolve this oversight, additional revisions were necessary to avoid any unintended consequences. First, DOPR schools still have students operating under the old OGT assessments. Language in ORC 3314.017 needed to be tweaked to ensure that students still taking the OGTs are still included in the high school assessment passage rate component of the report card. This section also needed to be updated to ensure ODE recalculated the 2017-2018 report card and calculates the 2018-2019 report card using the new scoring measure. Otherwise, DOPR schools meeting current standards, could be subject to sanctions, including automatic closure, based on an unfair report card standard.

The changes accepted by this committee corrects an oversight that had devastating consequences on the DOPR community. Thank you for listening to our concerns and addressing this problem.

Sincerely,

Adam Clark

Executive Director

TRECA Digital Academy