



**Interested Party testimony submitted to the
House Finance Committee
House Bill 110
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Chair Oelslager, Vice-Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Crawley, and Members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill 110. Open Doors Academy (ODA) provides out-of-school time (OST) enrichment to kids and young adults living across Greater Cleveland and Lima. We are an independent, non-profit organization, and our mission is to protect, inspire, nurture, and challenge youth to reach their full potential. We serve hundreds of kids and families each year across five school districts in Northeast Ohio and Lima. **The legislature recognized ODA’s work in the prior budget, including an earmark of \$2.2 million each fiscal year in TANF funds for OST programming. We ask that you support an amendment to maintain this funding in House Bill 110.**

ODA is unique as the only program in Northeast Ohio that offers year-round support to youth beginning in middle school and extending through high school graduation and beyond. We provide programs for kids and families in middle school, high school, postsecondary, family engagement, and summer learning. In the 2019-2020 school year, ODA enrolled 385 students across 11 schools in four districts. The majority of our scholars are African American and come from low income families. In fact, over 90% of our kids and families live at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.

Our model is research-based and built on the belief that providing youth with a safe environment, caring adult relationships, and strong community partnerships builds a solid foundation to achieve their academic and career goals. We believe our outcomes speak to the success of our model: last year, 81% of ODA students improved their math proficiency and since 2018, 93% of ODA students graduated high school.

ODA launched the Center for Out-of-School Advancement (COSA) in 2018 to elevate the field of OST education and programming as a key to breaking the cycle of multi-generational poverty. The Ohio Department of Education has recognized ODA’s expertise in OST education, partnering with

COSA to provide professional development and regional trainings to over 200 other OST programs across Ohio that serve over 40,000 kids. COSA strengthens the OST field for programs in all corners of the state that are recipients of Ohio's 21st Century Community Learning Center grants via a three-prong approach: helping OST programs build organizational capacity, conducting high quality research that promotes innovative models, and advocating for the field.

Recognizing that students needed additional support during the 2020-2021 school year to participate in online academic instruction, ODA opened nine Remote Learning Centers where over 500 students in grades K-8 participate in their online academic instruction with *in-person support and supervision* from the ODA team. We quickly realized that parents needed safe childcare options for the school year with reliable internet and technology, and kids needed additional support for their learning, development, and social emotional well-being.

Again, I ask that you support an amendment to maintain funding for ODA in the operating budget so that we can continue to work with children across Ohio to reach their full potential. Thank you for your consideration of this request.