



**Proponent Testimony Regarding HB 67
Dr. Eugene Sanders – Sandusky City Schools
Ohio House Primary and Secondary Education Committee**

Good morning, Chair Manning, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee. I'm grateful for the opportunity to provide feedback on HB 67. My name is Eugene Sanders and I am the Superintendent of Sandusky City Schools.

I have served children and communities as a teacher, college professor, administrator, and in the private sector. I have served as Superintendent of Schools in Sandusky, Toledo, and Cleveland. Today, I lead a group of similarly situated schools in the Ohio Mid-Sized Urban Districts Leadership Collaborative. It is in this capacity that I am before you today.

I hope that everyone can agree that COVID-19 transformed the experience of Ohio children in K-12 schools. The variety of instructional methods, available resources, and community spread of the virus affected each district, in fact each student, differently.

There is always value in gleaning new data about our students' academic standing. However: there have been growing concerns regarding the implications that high-stakes testing have had on low-wealth and minority sub-groups as it pertains to equity within our existing metrics in Ohio.

To this, **I feel compelled to support a recommendation to suspend the spring testing requirement based on significant concerns relative to equity and trauma that both students and adults are grappling with as a result of the health crisis.** We know that disproportionality is one of outgrowth of COVID that has illuminated the disparities that many of us serving low-wealth and minorities communities have always confront in our service to advance learning. I believe there is merit in allowing local communities to determine their community's needs with respect to creating the high stakes testing environment to get baseline data. It my belief that creating the high stake testing environment has resources availability and social emotional implications.

I recognize that reasonable people may disagree about whether tests should be given at the end of this school year. However, I hope that we can all agree that Ohio schools should not be punished for any testing which would occur during this year. I understand that HB 67, Sponsored by Vice Chair Bird and Representative Koehler, would permit schools who wished to test to go ahead and do so, while holding all schools harmless, regardless of their choice.

As the Chief Executive Officer and Superintendent, I support an approach that incorporates local decision-making opportunities for practitioners not mandates from the top. I feel confident that my peers and my leadership team know what is in the best interest of our communities. We have and will continue to gather diagnostic data to address the holistic needs of the students and families we serve despite the outcome of this decision.

Madam Chair, I thank you for the thought and consideration you have put into this bill thus far, and I appreciate the opportunity to share my perspective and support for HB 67. I am happy to answer any questions via phone or email – I can be reached at 419.984.1000 or esanders@scs-k12.net .