



**GLOBAL IMPACT**  
STEM ACADEMY

## Global Impact STEM Academy

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Chairwoman Manning, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee – thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide proponent testimony for House Bill 67.

I am Jamison Truebenbach, the Chief Academic Officer at Global Impact STEM Academy, an Independent STEM School located in Clark County Ohio. I am fortunate to have been with Global Impact STEM Academy since its inception in the fall of 2013.

The 2020-2021 school year has brought many challenges to students, staff, and schools across the state. Global Impact has been operating in a live blended model of instruction to reduce the density of students in our building. Students either connect from home via their school-issued computer and hotspot, or they are in a blended rotation, giving each student the opportunity to attend in person on a limited basis. As we prepare for the return of students five days a week starting March 1st our focus will be on the well being of students. Time will be spent on restoring school culture, filling in learning gaps due to the pandemic, improving the mental health of our students and building upon the student - teacher relationship. The time, energy, and resources that will be spent to administer the state assessments this spring will take away from what has to happen to transition students back into the building successfully with only three months left in the school year. Our school utilizes every single staff member (from myself, guidance counselors, teachers, internal substitutes and secretaries) to administer the OAA (7/8th grade), the EOC (End of Course in grades 9-12), the ACT for our juniors, and the WebXam for our students in Career and Technical Education courses. The amount of time spent figuring out the logistics of administering these assessments safely to all students, those in person 5 days a week and those who chose to remain virtual, even after we return in full, will be significant and extraordinarily burdensome. Due to the circumstances we find ourselves in this year, time and resources need to be utilized and focused on supporting teachers and students in the transition to return to school and filling in anticipated learning gaps.

Countless hours are spent preparing for the test: Preparation to include organizing testing supplies (paper, pencils, table tents, and testing tickets), setting up tables for social distancing and test security, creating testing rosters, educating proctors on test security, uploading students into a database and ensuring accuracy with testing assignments. All of this dramatically disrupts an already disrupted schedule. The time spent on this can be utilized in much better ways this year specifically. The process alone requires the time of multiple staff members, which takes away from other areas of need at this time. While we know from credible sources that the pandemic has caused an increase in anxiety, depression, and stress

to our students, testing will only add to this burden. As we try to assimilate students back into the school building and lessen the burden of the many apprehensions, testing will only heighten it.

The burden to administer the OAA, AIR, ACT, WebXam in a normal year is extensive and it is amplified this year due to social distancing requirements and the amount of testing that occurs. Testing at the high school level alone will be daily for nearly a month when you test those in person and then provide a safe environment for those who are virtual. Contacting and scheduling the virtual students to come in and test will be a challenge in itself. There will also be make-up testing from the fall session that must occur due to the pandemic. This make up group alone will mean that several students will be taking more tests than usual which requires more proctors, more time and other additional resources. In addition, the ACT test will have to be offered numerous times in order to get every junior in the building tested (which is a requirement).

The potential misuse of time, energy, and resources administering the required state tests this year could have a detrimental impact on the success of the return to in-person learning. The last thing any school administrator, teacher, or employee wants is to set students up for failure. By administering any of the above mentioned assessments in a rushed fashion within a month of returning to in-person learning after being virtual or hybrid for a year will result in doing more harm than good. The results of the tests given will not be a true reflection of the students' ability and the mastery of education occurring at school. School administrators, staff and employees are well aware of the importance of student growth, high caliber teaching and standards based education; however, in the year of a pandemic the focus needs to be on the safety and well being of our students along with filling educational gaps not exploiting these gaps due to virtual/hybrid learning that had to occur. Our advocating for the removal of the high stakes assessment requirement for this year is not us placing any judgement on their value and validity in measuring student progress, it is simply a recognition of what we believe are rational and reasonable decisions in this unprecedented year. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

*Jamison Truebenbach*

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Chief Academic Officer