

**The Ohio House of Representatives Primary and Secondary Education Committee
SB178 Opposition Testimony
Bedford City School District**

December 13, 2022

Chairwoman Manning, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Minority Member Robinson, and members of the committee. My name is Danielle Turner Birch, Vice President and legislative liaison for the Bedford City School District, Bedford, Ohio. As an elected member of the board, I represent the voices of my constituents in our district. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you regarding SB178 on behalf of our community. It is of concern to me and our learning community that the state is drastically rushing into a restructuring process that could be damaging to many communities across the state especially districts that are disproportionately disadvantaged and marginalized. We oppose the creation of a new agency and the reduction in the role and significance of the State Board of Education and Superintendent of Public Instruction. SB 178 would diminish the role and authority of the elected members of the State Board of Education. The purpose of having an elected body is significant to representing the best interests of the citizens they represent. The creation of the Ohio Department of Education and the structure of the State Board of Education supports transparency through governance. With each of the 11 elected board members representing over 1 million Ohioans, it would behoove the state to find ways to increase representation rather than diminish it. Expanding the State Board of Education to a fully elected board would be advantageous in the efforts of increasing that representation providing a more inclusive space for public education. I move that you reconsider the push and vote No in dismantling the democracy and representation of our citizens.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

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