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**House Behavioral Health Committee  
April 23, 2024  
Proponent Testimony on HB 352  
Rachel Chilton, Executive Director, Ohio School Psychologists Association**

Chair Pavliga, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Brewer and members of the House Behavioral Health Committee, my name is Rachel Chilton and I am executive director of the Ohio School Psychologists Association, which represents more than 800 school psychologists across the state. These practitioners provide comprehensive psychological services within our state's preschool to 12<sup>th</sup> grade schools, Boards of Developmental Disabilities, medical settings, community behavioral health agencies, and higher education as faculty trainers. OSPA wants to express support for HB 352 as well as for an amendment that would add a school psychologist to the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study Commission.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) were determined in the 1990s through actuarial research by the Kaiser Permanente Foundation and the CDC to represent a constellation of familial and other psychosocial events that predict certain behavioral health outcomes in adulthood. The original ACEs are organized around broad themes of abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction and include 10 types of events. Recent literature proposes to add racism, bullying, and community violence, bringing the total ACEs to 13.

We are pleased that the sponsors are seeking to study the impacts of ACEs to impact future policymaking. Today, I ask you to support an amendment that would add a school psychologist to the list of members on the study commission. Currently, a school counselor is the only school-based practitioner named. As we appreciate, our schools today have many different professions who provide behavioral health services, including school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists.

Among that group, School Psychologists are unique in that they are considered the most highly trained mental health personnel who also have extensive knowledge of the educational system. They provide their comprehensive psychological services at both the post-master's and doctoral levels of educational preparation. Their scope of practice includes test interpretation, evaluation, diagnosis, intervention, prevention, and consultation of various elements that impact child and adult learning.



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School psychologists are extensively trained to understand and address trauma in children, recognizing its profound impact on their emotional, social, and academic well-being. They know and understand the different types of trauma and how these experiences can affect children's development and functioning into adulthood. Such determination, analysis, and study directly helps school psychologists support lifespan. This especially comes into play with how a student learns. They can't evaluate a student for a learning disability if they haven't ruled out trauma. This is something a school counselor or school social worker is not able to do, which is why it is key to include a school psychologist on the panel. As for trauma-informed practices in schools, school psychologists can support prevention and intervention services, provide training for the school staff, implement trauma-sensitive discipline policies, and offer trauma-informed behavioral health services.

In addition, School Psychologists are uniquely situated to add to the discussion about ACEs towards the below:

1. School psychology is a lifespan profession that includes prenatal through adulthood age considerations, it is not just PreK-12 grades.
2. School psychologists are in the discipline to predict behaviors and other outcomes based on data sources.
3. School psychology appreciates the systemic, ecological, and multivariate nature of early influences into predicting certain outcomes, particularly those involving child development and its impact into lifespan development.
4. School psychologists are trained, experienced, and experts in many areas of child and adult development as a part of their professional work.

Thank you for your consideration of this amendment and offering an opportunity to bring school psychologists rich expertise into this essential work. I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.