

House Economic & Workforce Development Committee

May 2, 2023

Testimony of Tom Goodney, Superintendent, ESC of Central Ohio

Good afternoon, Chair Swearingen, Vice Chair Santucci, Ranking Member Upchurch, and members of the committee. My name is Tom Goodney and I am Superintendent of the ESC of Central Ohio. Our ESC serves over 225,000 students in its member school districts and area career technical centers, while also providing direct services and supports to community schools, STEM schools, and chartered nonpublic schools including catholic schools within Central Ohio and across the state. We also govern and co-administer the work of the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (or OCALI), the ESC – Council of Governments, the Central Ohio Business Advisory Council and the State Support Team Region 11 in partnership with the Ohio Department of Education.

The State Support Team is one of many initiatives we administer on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education to bring needed improvement services and technical assistance to schools and students throughout the Central Ohio region. We have provided leadership for the Department of Education on numerous initiatives related to content standards, student assessments, district and school-level data analysis, staff professional development, innovative learning models, school safety initiatives, whole child supports, strategic staffing, and comprehensive shared services all with the underlying mission of strengthening our capacity so that we may serve others. The ESC of Central Ohio and the network of ESCs in Ohio have had a long-standing committed partnership with the Department of Education and its work, and because of that fact, I'd like to provide interested party testimony regarding Senate Bill 1 and its proposed changes with a particular emphasis on the career technical education and workforce related aspects of the bill.

For over a decade now, our ESC has focused substantial resources and much of our effort and attention on helping all schools help their students make workforce connections with regional businesses and industry partners by serving as a founding member and co-convenor of the Central Ohio Compact. In addition, we now administer the Central Ohio Business Advisory Council, whose ultimate goal is to increase and enhance the dialogue between schools and business partners to ensure workforce preparedness and post-secondary career readiness of students. We have established processes and personnel supports for schools to deliver effective career readiness opportunities with local businesses through internships, pre-apprenticeship programs, and work-based learning initiatives. These programs are seeing rapid growth in the Central Ohio region and we look forward to continuing to enhance this growth further, especially in areas such as computer science and STEM.

Assuming this bill were to become law, it is critical that Ohio invest in ESCs and the Educational Regional Service System (ERSS) under Chapter 3312 of the Ohio Revised Code. Restructuring an entire state agency, while not unprecedented, is not a simple task and it would behoove the legislature to invest in the new Department of Education and Workforce's implementation partners – the ESCs. By investing and fully funding ESCs and other regional partners, the state will be able to mitigate any service disruptions to schools and districts that arise with the transition. Our ESC and other regional service system partners are ready and willing to support this work, but would be better prepared to do so with an increased investment from the state.

The ESC of Central Ohio is committed to support the work of the state, its schools, its educators, and most importantly, its students as we look to emphasize their future opportunities to be educated, to work, and to thrive in the workforce here in Ohio. This is a vital component of our public purpose in

federal and state policy.

I look forward to leading our ESC as we grow our impact in these areas in partnership with ODE presently and the Department of Education and Workforce in the coming years.

Chair Swearingen, thank you for this opportunity to offer written testimony and I would be happy to meet with any of you to answer questions and discuss the work of the ESC of Central Ohio.