

**House Higher Education Committee  
HB 572 Written Proponent Testimony  
Shannon Cox, Superintendent  
Montgomery County Educational Service Center  
June 12, 2024**

Good morning, Chairman Young, Vice-Chair Manning, Ranking Minority Member Miller, members of the House Higher Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 572. My name is Shannon Cox, and I am the superintendent for the Montgomery County Educational Service Center (MCESC). We operate to serve the needs of school districts and private schools (and their respective students) in and around the Montgomery County area.

I appreciate Representative White's sponsorship of HB 572. The bill would require the Chancellor of Higher Education to conduct a one-time audit of Ohio's educator preparation programs to determine what instruction they provide to students on mental and behavioral health, behavior management, and classroom management. As we consider the present-day needs of students and the many challenges facing Ohio's many classroom teachers, information gathered through these audits could be so very valuable.

As you know, student needs have evolved over the past few years; some due to conditions related to the recent pandemic, and also because of changes in our society. Teachers and other school leaders have observed an uptick in the number of students experiencing mental health challenges. Classroom behavior has become a bigger issue than in the past, with even incidences occurring with our youngest most vulnerable students. It is vital that teachers come to the classroom fully prepared to deal with situations they may not have envisioned through the training they received in their education preparation program.

I do not believe the purpose of HB 572 is to criticize our educator preparation programs, but instead, it will help to inform their important work. It is abundantly clear that knowledge of content and the ability to prepare students academically is crucial to a teacher's success. Unfortunately, what is becoming more and more important to academic success, is a teacher's ability to handle situations related to students' mental and behavioral health. The HB 572 audits of what is currently being taught related to these issues will provide information to Ohio's higher education institutions in a positive way that could lead to improvements in teacher preparedness.

Therefore, I urge the committee to support HB 572.

This concludes my testimony. Please feel free to contact me with questions.

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