

Senate Education Committee

February 14, 2023

Testimony of Tom Goodney, Superintendent, ESC of Central Ohio

Good afternoon Chair Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram, 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 support to community schools, STEM schools, and chartered nonpublic schools including catholic schools within Central Ohio and across the state. We govern and co-administer the work of the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (or OCALI), the ESC – Council of Governments, the ESCCO Business Advisory Council and the State Support Team Region 11 in partnership with the Ohio Department of Education. And last year, per House Bill 583, we were named the coordinating agency of a statewide tutoring and remedial education program now known as Tutor Ohio Kids.

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 children 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, 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 business 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. ESCs across the state are implementing similar, customized services aligned to locally- and regionally-defined priorities. As you deliberate Senate Bill 1, I would encourage you to look at how to sustain and accelerate those successes and ensure that nothing within the statewide system of support be lost in the transition should the bill advance.

The ESC of Central Ohio is committed to continuing 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. ESCs are a vital, “boots on the ground” partner that should be a central component of any implementation strategy.

Chair Brenner, thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony, and I will be happy to respond to any questions at the pleasure of the chair.