

MARIAN UNIVERSITY

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Center for Vibrant Schools



Jillian Lain

Regarding SB 162

October 25, 2023

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Ohio Senate Education Committee,

My name is Jillian Lain, and I am the Director of City Connects Midwest from the Marian University Center for Vibrant Schools. We are here today to provide feedback on Ohio Senate Bill Number 162 as it relates to Student Interventions.

As proponents of integrated student support via the City Connects program, we want to provide input regarding the proposed student intervention plan with this lens in mind. We know and understand the importance of academic achievement, but in order to see academic gains, out of school factors need to be addressed in conjunction with academics.

As context, City Connects was developed 22 years ago through a partnership between Boston College and Boston Public Schools. City Connects results in every child receiving a tailored set of prevention, intervention, and enrichment supports. In implementation, a full-time City Connects coordinator—a school-based, Master's-level school counselor or social worker—is a member of a school's student-support team. Once a year, Coordinators meet with each teacher to review the strengths and needs of each and every student. Coordinators create an individualized plan for each child in close consultation with families, students, and others in the school. Tailored services for each child are secured from existing community agency and school resources within four domains: Academics, Health, Social Emotional/Behavioral, and Family.

As referenced in the written testimony written by Boston College Center for Thriving Children, in order to drive an improvement in academics, it is vital that out-of-school factors are also addressed. With that, a first point of feedback for SB 162 would be to highly encourage the committee to consider including evidence-based integrated student support as a part of this bill.

Additionally, as mentioned in SB 162, it is extremely important that we ensure students receive the right interventions, at the right time, for the right duration of time. This process is built directly into integrated student support best practices and is a core component of the City Connects model. City Connects Site Coordinators systematically leverage school and community resources, which aids in ensuring that the right resources get to the right child at the right time, over time. Therefore, aligning the evidence-based academic interventions alongside evidence-based integrated student support practices, like City Connects, would be an important addition to the language.

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Finally, City Connects has been implementing within seven Ohio schools across Dayton and Springfield. As a part of my role, I work collaboratively with Boston College to support the implementation of City Connects in these Ohio schools and have seen the impact firsthand.

In the 2022-23 school year, a City Connects coordinator created and implemented individualized student support plans for 99% of students. These plans ensured students received appropriate support, including prevention and enrichment services like after-school programs, early intervention services like tutoring, and intensive crisis intervention services like mental health services. In this same academic year, 284 tutoring services were delivered. Of those services delivered, the schools partnered with 16 community agencies on the delivery or tutoring to students.

We firmly believe that aligning evidence-based tutoring interventions with the evidence-based integrated student support of City Connects is an important component to include within SB 162. We are confident that with City Connects' proven track record, expanding City Connects in your state will benefit Ohio students and their academic growth. Thank you for your time and consideration. We appreciate all that you are already doing for students in Ohio.



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