



December 10, 2024

Good Afternoon Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, and Ranking Member Ingram and members of the Senate Education committee on Primary and Secondary Education.

My name is Dave Cash and I am CEO of Charter School Specialists. Charter School Specialists working in partnership with St. Aloysius Orphanage provides sponsorship oversight, monitoring, and technical assistance to schools they sponsor. A community school sponsor since 2005, St. Aloysius also operates a large mental health facility in Cincinnati, serving children and families in the tri-state area for 180 years. St. Aloysius Orphanage earned a rating 'exemplary' based upon performance as measured by Ohio's sponsor evaluation system. I have been engaged in community school sponsorship for 24 years, starting in the Community School Office at the Ohio Department of Education.

As a community school sponsor and advocate, I would offer proponent testimony regarding Senate Bill 295.

As a community school sponsor, our charge from the General Assembly is to foster effective educational options for Ohio's families. To ensure our schools are in compliance with the Ohio Revised Code, and Ohio Administrative Code. To monitor growth towards meeting academic standards. To provide technical assistance in any and all areas of need. Lastly, we also serve in a gatekeeper role; deciding whether a potential school opens, or a poor school closes. In this gatekeeper role our charge is to assess the likelihood of success of all proposals for new schools and to target areas of need in the State. Essentially, sponsors are the key to maintaining and expanding compliant, cost-effective schools that offer quality educational options to Ohio students and to target these schools where there is the most need.

The above litany of responsibilities includes the closure of poor performing schools. Our definition of poor performing includes not only academic, but financial and organizational performance as well. Over the years we have closed a number of schools for each of these reasons. What I have noticed in my 24 years is that many times we are closing a community school in the shadow of a district school that is performing much worse. We closed the best option for families, because the State is serious about holding community schools accountable, just not serious about holding all schools accountable. For some reason not all students seem to deserve the best educational option.

SB 295, if passed, would be historic. The State of Ohio would finally be serious about holding every school accountable for performance and not just community school students. All students deserve a high quality education whether by a district school or a community school

We applaud the leadership of Chairman Brenner, and the committee members that are willing to take this historic step forward.

Thank you,

Dave Cash

Charter School Specialists