



**Ohio Senate Committee on Workforce and Higher Education  
Interested Party Testimony  
HB 33 – FY24-25 State Operating Budget**

**Lisa and Russ Welsh, parents of a child receiving The S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Approach  
Tuesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

Thank you for granting the time to hear our family’s testimony. My name is Lisa Welsh, and I am a mother of two, a pediatric nurse, and have an 8-year-old son with Autism. I am writing about the potency and effectiveness of the S.U.C.C.E.S.S. approach model and supporting the **SUCCESSful Training for Autism: An Interprofessional Collaborative Pilot Program**. I am also writing on behalf of my family and the many families that are pleading for help and asking for our educational system to look at the education of children with Autism differently. The neurological ‘wiring’ is unique in each child with Autism and therefore, the execution of education needs to translate to these unique needs. We are a digest of failed stories inside and out of the educational system utilizing models that are not comprehensive and lack specificity to our children’s neurodiverse needs. The **SUCCESSful Training for Autism: An Interprofessional Collaborative Pilot Program** is the model that all schools should have to educate children with needs.

We saw at an early age our son had neurodiverse needs. He became over stimulated very quickly, had significant sensory needs, hand flapped, required constant redirection, and had verbal, nonverbal, and social-emotional communication deficits. Our son was asked to leave two community-based preschools and was unsuccessful with an active IEP in the public-school integrated classroom setting. These education settings were unable to identify, intervene, and teach him strategies to address his needs. This made gaining access to the educational curriculum impossible. After these failed attempts, my husband quit his job and we started homeschooling our son. We were lost, hopeless, and felt alone. We were grieving because we questioned IF he would be able to reach milestones including making friends, driving, dating, going to college, or ever living on his own. We started looking for resources and models that could help him and found the S.U.C.C.E.S.S. approach with Dr. Lynette Scotese-Wojtila. He has been receiving the S.U.C.C.E.S.S. approach model for Autism for 4 years and to say it has been life changing would be an understatement. Within weeks of starting, we saw immediate progression in his cognitive and processing development, emotional regulation, and a bonus, his feeding palate and his willingness to eat new things expanded. We continue to see daily progress and we are no longer asking ourselves IF our son will be able to reach milestones, rather WHEN. As parents, we are no longer lost. Today, our son is thriving, he’s reading above his grade level, loves science, and is excited about algebra. He has friends, can name and execute strategies to help himself when overstimulated, and has an expanded vocabulary and an articulated communicator. He is learning to tap into his true potential because of the strategies the S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Approach has given him that he otherwise would not have known he was capable of.

As parents to a child with Autism, the hardest thing to explain to educators is that Autism is a “whole person” disability that impacts every facet of your child’s functioning. The approach to delivering services and interventions should be comprehensive as well. The S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Approach model finds the ‘just right fit’ interventions for a child and identifies what they need to thrive as a whole individual, not just a particular skill to be learned.

We want this model to reach as many children as possible to see the same successes and progressions we have seen in our son. He is a living example of the success of this model. The impacts to integrating this approach into educational settings would be quantifiable. The impacts on tapping into these children’s true psychological and neurological potentials, would be society changing. This decision will change the way children with Autism are able to become the best versions of themselves and thriving members of our communities.

Please maintain and support S.U.C.C.E.S.S. for Autism’s ask of \$100,000 within the Ohio Department of Higher Education’s Program Support line. Thank you for your consideration of this request.