

Chairwoman Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Higher Education Committee,

My name is Walter Skaggs, and I am honored to submit this written testimony as the Superintendent of the St. Clairsville-Richland City School District and a member of the Executive Board of the Coalition of Rural and Appalachian Schools in support of Ohio House Bill 62. This legislation presents an opportunity to enhance the educational landscape of Ohio by providing necessary resources and policy adjustments that will directly benefit our students, educators, and communities.

As a superintendent, I have seen firsthand the challenges that school districts across our state face in ensuring that our students receive a high-quality education. House Bill 62 addresses several key areas that will significantly impact our ability to deliver effective instruction and maintain financial stability within our district.

One of the primary reasons I stand in support of HB 62 is its commitment to equitable funding. Our district, like many others, has struggled with disparities in funding that create inequities in educational opportunities. By allocating resources in a manner that considers the needs of all students, regardless of their zip code, HB 62 takes a meaningful step towards closing these gaps and ensuring every child has access to quality education.

In the 2023-2024 school year, St. Clairsville High School students earned a total of 1,066 semester hours through CCP. Of those 1,066 semester hours, 297 were completed online, comprising 47% of the total coursework. The cost to St. Clairsville Schools for CCP in 2023-2024 was \$66,650, with online courses alone accounting for \$31,418—46% of the total cost. This data highlights a troubling disparity: lower-quality online courses are costing significantly more than in-person instruction.

In the 2024-2025 school year, St. Clairsville students earned a total of ____ semester hours through CCP. ____ hours were completed online, representing ____% of the total coursework. The cost continues to grow a

Additionally, this bill includes provisions that support infrastructure improvements, which are critical for the safety and well-being of our students and staff. Many of our school buildings are aging and in need of repairs or modernization to meet today's educational standards. Investing in our schools is an investment in our future workforce, economy, and community development.

Furthermore, HB 62 proposes measures that enhance professional development opportunities for educators. Teachers are at the heart of student success, and by providing them with ongoing training and support, we empower them to implement innovative teaching strategies that can improve student outcomes.

Support for House Bill 62 – College Credit Plus (CCP) Enhancements

- **Expanded College Access:** The bill helps students earn transcribed college credits while in high school, easing their transition to higher education and lowering college costs.
- **Financial Support for All Students:** Ensures funding mechanisms for nonpublic and home-educated students, promoting educational equity.
- **Fair Cost Structure:** Reduces online CCP course costs from \$166.55 to \$83.28 per credit hour, aligning with in-person course rates.
- **In-Person Instruction Priority:** Supports in-district CCP courses, where research shows student success rates are higher than online courses.
- **Lower Textbook Costs:** Shifts textbook expenses from school districts to colleges, removing a financial burden from K-12 schools.
- **Academic Rigor & Collaboration:** Strengthens high school-college partnerships, enhancing curriculum alignment and student success.

In closing, I urge this committee and the members of the General Assembly to consider the profound impact that House Bill 62 will have on Ohio's education system. By supporting this bill, you are making a commitment to the success of our students, the strength of our communities, and the future of our great state. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours in Education,

Dr. Walter E. Skaggs Jr.

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