



House Finance Committee
House Bill 96
Dorothy Moulthrop, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer
Open Doors Academy
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Chair Stewart, Vice Chair Dovilla, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 96. My name is Dorothy Moulthrop, and I am the Chief Executive Officer of Open Doors Academy (ODA). ODA is an educational nonprofit that provides high quality afterschool programs, summer camps, and year-round family engagement programming to children and young adults across Northeast and Northwest Ohio. We will serve more than 1,850 youth and their families this school year.

ODA is a workforce solution for many families that cannot otherwise afford childcare before and after school or during the summer. What sets ODA apart from other out-of-school time providers is our understanding that youth are best positioned to learn when their basic needs are met, and they are interested in the instructional content. We partner with local food banks to ensure that children receive snacks, meals and, in some cases, a bag of groceries to take home. In addition to working with math and reading tutors, we collaborate with our local partners to find instructors and courses that are educational and fun, like our culinary programs in Sandusky and Mansfield.

A recent analysis of the impact of our program on scholars' grades at our programs in Mansfield, Lima, and Sandusky, and in Lorain County further demonstrates the success of this model. On average, 66% of our scholars improved their grades in English/Language and 64% of scholars improved their grades in Math from the first to third quarter of the 2022-2023 school year.

Our studies have also proven the effectiveness of ODA's programming model in fighting chronic absenteeism. During the 2023-24 school year, our scholars showed an improved school day attendance rate of up to 66%, and on average spend 10 days more in school than their peers.

While our name may suggest otherwise, ODA is not a school, and we do not receive per pupil funding. We have been fortunate to receive TANF earmarks in prior budgets, which has allowed us to expand from 14 sites in the 2019-2020 school year to 28 sites in eight school districts today. **I would like to ask for your support of a budget amendment to direct \$3 million in TANF funds each fiscal year to ODA.** There is significant interest and demand for our programs across the state, and TANF support is vital for our ability to continue to meet this need.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I'm happy to answer any questions that you may have.