STATEMENT BY ANURUPA GANGULY ON HOUSE/SENATE BILL 96

Before the Ohio Senate Education Committee

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chairman Blessing,, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee,

Good morning, and thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Anurupa Ganguly, and I am the founder and CEO of Prisms, the first virtual reality platform designed to teach Grades 6-12 math and science through embodied, kinesthetic and career connected problem-solving.

Prisms is currently deployed in over 40 school districts across Ohio in partnership with the Montgomery County Educational Service Center. In a third-party study conducted by Wested in middle and high school Algebra I classrooms in Ohio, Prisms demonstrated an 11 percent increase in Algebra I benchmark assessments. Beyond raw achievement, teachers also reported significant increases in students' authentic motivation. Not through gamification, click bait and addiction, but through deep sense-making, hunger and interest in solving the world's most important problems through the frameworks of mathematics.

And, because Prisms learning experiences treat special education students not as deficit-based, but multimodal, and multidimensional thinkers, the students who typically struggle the most in middle school and high school math demonstrated enduring success and confidence.

By way of a quick introduction to myself, my journey with STEM education reform began at MIT where I studied Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. Seeing the massively low participation and success rates of female, high poverty and rural students across the US, after graduation, I became a high school Physics and Math teacher in the Boston Public Schools to understand what was causing so many American students to drop off through their STEM education. To have a broader impact beyond my classroom, I stepped into district leadership roles in Math Curriculum & Instruction for the city of Boston and later in New York City DOE. Through my experiences working with millions of high need students personally, I became convicted that we do not have the tools to close the achievement gap in Middle School Math and Algebra, because the ways that we naturally learn Math -- spatially, through abstracting up from physical human experiences, through movement, and relevant problems -- were categorically absent in our teaching tools.

I started Prisms 5 years ago to build a new spatial paradigm for Math education where relevancy, purpose, kinesthetic learning, and as a result unequivocal success on benchmark proficiencies become the New normal. Not continuously failing test scores. The state of Ohio was my first lighthouse US state. We are now across 35 states due to the potential and successes we demonstrated here in this state.

Here in Ohio, we've heard testimonies from students that they will forever remember the substitution method for solving a system of linear equations in Algebra I, because they have a visceral memory of serving at Chicago's O'hare airport as an air traffic controller during a

thunder storm. Not by reading a word problem, but experiencing the scenario with their bodies, eliminating the fear of word problems. Then using tactile flight simulators to understand how and why flight paths collide in the air, to derive the mathematical method to solve for the collision point. We had students, a year later, who were able to narrate the exact steps or algorithm to solve a system of equations - a procedure we as Algebra teachers re-teach year over year for our end of year assessments, the SAT and beyond, creating huge inefficiencies in our math educational system.

Prisms is not just a tool for students. Over 50 percent of teachers have considered leaving the profession in the past two years. As one of our earliest teachers in Dayton shared, she was going to retire, but stayed in the field of teaching due to new thinking like Prisms that elevate her teaching practice, methodologies and student success. Our national teacher institutes, rigorous intellectual preparation systems, classroom coaching models are rapidly leveling up teachers to scale first-person, problem-based learning that's seeing historic increases in student motivation and achievement at a time where student apathy and disengagement in Math classrooms have become unbearable for teachers like us to watch.

After demonstrating the success of our model in our pioneering Ohio schools, we are looking to expand to reach new educators and students in 2025 with a state-supported pilot program. We are seeking funding support to scale this new teaching paradigm to serve an additional 32,000 middle school Math and Algebra I students and 500 teachers in select high need school districts across the state. This partnership represents a meaningful investment in improving Ohio's educational outcomes and building Ohio's next-generation workforce, that I am personally committed to.

Thank you for your time, and passion to finally reimagine a math educational system that has not delivered for our children who need it most. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I am happy to answer any questions.