

Ohio House Finance Committee

Written testimony on the Straight A Fund Provisions of House Bill 64, the FY16-17 Budget

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Beavercreek City Schools

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Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member Driehaus and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today regarding the Straight A Fund section of House Bill 64, the Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Biennial Budget. I am William McGlothlin Ed.D., superintendent of Beavercreek City Schools.

Beavercreek City Schools is a district with a long history of applying innovative thinking and teaching strategies to prepare students for success after graduation. With our \$3.866 million Straight A Fund grant, *Sparking Innovation: Individualizing Learning with a Customized 21<sup>st</sup> Century Educational Platform*, we set out to elevate student achievement at all levels by pairing individualized instruction with technology. To achieve this, we loaded 5,600 iPads with eSpark, an individualized learning platform, and provided the devices to all K-8 students in our district.

eSpark uses technology to provide engaging content that is personalized to each student's unique learning needs in math and English language arts. This innovative approach to technology integration emphasizes individualized learning based on frequent formative assessment and data for instructional design and lesson delivery. As a direct result of the Straight A Grant, the students and teachers of Beavercreek City Schools are actively engaged with 21<sup>st</sup> century technology while developing 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, including information, media and technology, critical thinking, communication and problem solving.

Upon implementation of our Straight A Grant, significant changes in instructional design and practice—and remarkable growth in student achievement—have occurred in our elementary and middle schools. We have successfully integrated eSpark into the instructional practices of our K-8 classrooms to complement and expand on the high-level primary instruction delivered by our classroom teachers. Consequently, we have met our goal of personalizing intervention, remediation and enrichment both inside and outside the classroom walls. eSpark's

personalized learning plans (or “quests”) enable students to not just be consumers of information, but also to create and problem solve using technology. At the end of each eSpark quest, students use the cameras on their iPads to create their own videos or presentations to reteach a Common Core math or English language arts standard to their teachers. This pushes students to engage in critical, high-level thinking and allows our teachers to have multiple authentic video assessments to identify misunderstandings or mastery on numerous standards.

Analysis of the NWEA MAP, a nationally normed, Ohio Department of Education-approved formative assessment, shows that eSpark is having a significant and meaningful impact on student achievement. Our students grew nearly three times as fast in their academic domains, or subject areas, targeted by the NWEA compared to other domains that were not targeted for instruction. These results are consistent across K-8 in both math and reading. Differentiated learning through eSpark’s platform technology has had a profound impact on the subgroups that are identified on our district report card. The largest impact has been in students who scored at the 25th percentile or lower nationally on the NWEA assessment. From the fall administration to the winter administration of the NWEA assessment, these students grew an average of 20 percentile points compared to their peers nationally. Our English language learners grew 10 percentile points relative to their peers nationally. Beavercreek City Schools is demonstrating that ALL levels of students have great potential to grow and succeed. Personalized learning is unlocking that potential.

Beavercreek City Schools is actively supporting the replication of our Straight A Grant project. Upon receipt of the funding, we have been providing information to interested school districts regarding implementation strategies, challenges and successes. Beavercreek City Schools administrators frequently connect with leaders in other Ohio school districts to discuss the implementation of our Straight A Grant. As districts across Ohio seek information regarding the eSpark curriculum, they are provided a case study about Beavercreek, which includes a district overview, recent NWEA-MAP data and student vignettes. Last fall, Beavercreek City Schools presented two sessions entitled *Personalized Learning with iPads* at the Ohio School Boards Association Capital Conference. Within our session, Beavercreek administrators partnered with eSpark personnel to share information about iPad deployment and the implementation of personalized iPad curriculum for K-8 students. Beavercreek City Schools also hosted two “micro-events” for administrators and educators from across Ohio to learn about the 1:1 iPad program implemented with Straight A Grant funding, including classroom tours featuring students following their personalized eSpark quests.



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Beavercreek City Schools is proud to be one of the first recipients of Straight A Grant funding. This opportunity has positively impacted the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and college and career readiness of Beavercreek's students, significantly improved student achievement across all ability levels of students and provided the district with the opportunity to collaborate with school leaders across the state of Ohio. Therefore, we support the proposal in HB 64 to continue the Straight A Grant for the next two years.

Thank you for allowing Beavercreek City Schools to share our success with you today.