



Ohio Senate Finance Committee

Dear Chairman Oelslager and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am Sandra White and I am a veteran educator with 48 years of experience in private, public and community schools. I currently am serving as the Sponsor Evaluation Consultant on behalf of Findlay City Schools who is the sponsor of the high performing community school - Findlay Digital Academy.

I would like to thank you for allowing me past opportunities (May 24 and June 7 testimonies) to share with you some of the challenges associated with the Sponsor Evaluation system. I so appreciate your listening to what some of my colleagues and I shared in regard to the flawed Sponsor Evaluation system. We shared with you such concerns as:

- Receiving the rubric on February 10, 2017, that required things to be accomplished in August 2016
- The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) changing requirements mere days before the Quality section was due
- Only being able to receive a score of 0,2,4 on the Compliance portion of the evaluation
- ODE requiring Sponsors comply with something that is retroactive and directly contradicts another state agency's practice
- ODE not providing guidance for a November 1, 2016, report nor answering emails seeking guidance
- The 2015-16 Sponsor Evaluation causing some of the highest performing community schools in the state to be on the path to closing
- The mere volume of the paperwork that had to be submitted
- The unclear nature of the rubrics that caused schools to hire legal counsel to interpret what was being required
- The frustration of ODE not answering our phone calls or emails
- Plus many other concerns

I was greatly relieved when I read the amended section of HB 49 in Ohio Revised Code 3314.016 that would require ODE to post guidance documents and provide training by July 15th of each year, as opposed to waiting until February 10th to release this information. Your amendment also prohibits ODE from making changes to these guidance rubrics and requirements during the course of the school year. These changes demonstrate that you also support a fair, reasonable and

timely evaluation system. Knowing at the beginning of the school year what the evaluation requirements are for the Sponsor Evaluation process will help us be more efficient, allow us to comply with ODE's standards and better serve our students. I was also thrilled to see language added to the budget bill that shows the Ohio Senate values academic performance of community schools and their sponsors. Your changes will ensure that sponsors with high academic ratings will not have their sponsorship authority revoked.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for taking to heart our testimony and supporting action to correct a number of the flaws in the Sponsor Evaluation system! Through HB 49 both the Senate and the House have addressed and put in place items that make the Sponsor Evaluation system more reasonable, fair and timely, yet afford Sponsor and School accountability. Your support is so appreciated.

We know legislators worked very hard to hold Sponsors accountable, and we honor that commitment and dedication to Ohio's youth. Thank you again for looking for ways to improve the accountability system.

Sincerely,



Sandra H. White