

Testimony for Mark Ballard
President, Elected Board of Education
Lorain City Schools
Lorain, Ohio

Good Afternoon; I am Mark Ballard, the publically elected board member and president of the Lorain Board of Education in Lorain, Ohio. I am a native of Lorain and my family has been a part of the Lorain community for over 75 years. I am here today to humbly and respectfully request that the state elected officials abolish and eliminate the Academic Distress Commission from Lorain, Ohio as well as from Youngstown and East Cleveland. I am also requesting that the authority for public schools in Lorain, Ohio be re-established to the elected school board of our community. I am making this request for four specific reasons:

Reason # 1: I am proud to be an American. I am proud of my country. I have members in my family that have served in our armed forces. As Americans, we believe in local control. We believe in a representative government, and we believe that the people who live, work, worship, and call Lorain, Ohio home are the people who should, by our American laws and customs, have the absolute and sole right to elect their school board members. In Lorain, Ohio, this basic constitutional right has been hijacked, it has been stolen and I am here to represent the people of my hometown, Lorain, Ohio by saying we want our schools back and we want the failed, dysfunctional, and utterly unsuccessful ADC abolished and removed from Lorain, Ohio

Reason #2: The disruption, chaos, in-fighting, and destruction of our community that has been caused by the ADC has been unimaginable. There is no one sitting in the room, or in this state that would want to have their school system confined with these restrains. The ADC has pitted brother against brother and sister against sister. Our children and families are the big losers. The brow beating of our teachers and students and the impact on our parents cannot be fully explained in the short three minutes I have today. The bottom line is that our city is in ruins because of the ADC. I don't have time to even share with you the impact of the ADC has had on our economic growth, business development, and the city's reputation.

Reason #3: The ADC model in Ohio and specifically in Lorain, Ohio has been an abject failure, on all levels and on all measures. Our scores are worse than they have ever been. Period and point blank. Our scores are in the toilet because there is a toxic environment led by the results of the ADC. It will take Lorain City Schools a decade to recover from the carnage and destruction caused by the ADC. It has been a total disaster.

Reason # 4: Lorain City Schools has a plan. In Lorain, Ohio, the elected Board of Education has developed a move forward plan. I have copies with me today. If the ADC is abolished in Lorain today, our school board is ready to assume leadership tomorrow. The key element of our plan is that it involves collaboration, teamwork, collegiality, partnership and engaging all people who call Lorain home.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to answering any questions you might have.