

Thank you Madam Chair Lehner, Vice Chair Terhar, Ranking Member Fedor, and the entire Education committee for your time and consideration. What you are taking on is nothing short of a herculean task, but you all have proven time and time again that you handle with such diligence. Your effort is greatly appreciated by thousands of families across this state and will be appreciated by the young people whose future are in your hands and equally in your hearts and minds.

If it is not evident by my third appearance in front of you, I appreciate you and your deliberation. You understand the gravity of the moment and significance of your vote. After reading the proposed amendments presented from the Senate, I applaud your ability to lift above those clouds and see the light that can lead to the success of our state's children if we continue to push forward.

Dr. King once said, "Change does not come in on the wheels of inevitability but comes through continuous struggle. A struggle that for me began for with my parents, who have varying levels of education, but wanted nothing less than the best for their two boys. A struggle that continued as I entered the classroom as a teacher, to a middle school principal in Brooklyn where 98% of our scholars who became proficient in 6th and 7th grade math to being a leader of the academic team that helped St. Louis Public Schools reach accreditation for the first time since 2000. I say all of this to say, the struggle is worth it and will pay off for the people that matter the most; our kids.

Your leadership will ensure the same conviction in the proposed School Transformation Board and School Improvement Commission remains strong and focus on educational outcomes. I understand how the current construction of ADCs provided some pause because the best interest of our kids hasn't matched the unfortunate superiority touted by the adults of past powers. The voices of a few overshadowed the power that resides in our strong, longest standing, resilient commissioners who wanted to focus on what is right and rightfully refuse to add to the current narrative of negativity. My hope is that there is a rigorous, objective vetting process designed to produce individuals who are ready for this charge and focused on outcomes rather than optics.

Outcomes that I believe will begin to show the promise we all have been waiting for.

I am confident that when our State Report Card graces our inboxes, they'll show that our kids are making progress and that we need the will to continue with the transformation of our education system. My only suggestions hinge on accountability and sustainability. For what it is worth, I hope that further consideration is given to seeing sustained progress extended to the length of a graduating cohort before a transition of power. The progress that I suggest should be sustained with a healthy transition to objective leaders when the times comes, but should not be pushed to the local leaders until the extent of the progress is understood. The progress that started with the creation and implementation of The Lorain Promise that contains and is driven by the voice of the community impacted by our district's transformation. I worry that a new plan or the removal of our current plan one would slow our progress. I humbly ask that lines 603-606 on page 21 and 22 are carefully considered for a district that is truly moving in the right direction—especially after only 24 months of work a committed team of leaders, teachers, staff, and community who want to undo decades of educational neglect.

In closing, I want to be clear; I appreciate the work that has been done. It was done with kids in mind first—from the Governor's Executive Budget to this very strong, thoughtful proposal—this is a tremendous step forward. I see a commitment to the necessary transformation and the importance of local voice and accountability. I see strengthened oversight that provides the essential checks and

balances that our very democracy depends on. Most importantly, I see a compromise of powerful ideas without it compromising our children. I see legislation that places the social, economic, and financial well-being of this state first by not backing away from its duty to see that its future—its children—receive the education they deserve. Thank you for putting our kids first.

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