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Senate Education Committee
Testimony on the Academic Distress Commission Proposal
Ryan Stechschulte, Treasurer/CFO, Toledo Public Schools
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Chairwoman Lehner, Vice Chairman Terhar, Ranking Member Fedor, thank you for the opportunity to respond to the proposal currently being considered to replace Ohio's Academic Distress Commission (ADC) statutes. Our district is one that has been identified as a possible candidate for a state takeover under the current ADC laws.

Let me begin by stating that I, along with the other leaders in the Toledo Public School District, oppose any plan that removes our ability to manage the district. We value local control and the current ADC system undermines that in a big way. Our district (and others like it) need tools and resources to help students succeed and to make improvements in the overall performance of our student body.

The proposal distributed prior to this hearing still contains a significant amount of state involvement in the local decisions we could make as a district to turn around the performance of the school buildings in our district. In that regard, we think the proposal moves away from the HB 154 provisions (contained in the House version of HB 166) that allow for more local decision-making and involvement. As mentioned earlier, we seek assistance and resources – not decision-making at the state level.

Further, not all the buildings in the Toledo Public Schools would fall into a category of "in need of improvement." Any proposal to replace the current ADC system should recognize the good work already being done in the district and target those buildings that need the most help. Rather than disrupting the good things that are happening in the district, we urge you to provide resources to address things on a school building basis.

In conclusion, we do not support the proposal as presented and prefer the Senate enact the provisions from the House version of HB 166. If there is not yet agreement on the use of school improvement organizations and how those fit into local efforts to turn around underperforming school buildings, the legislature should take more time to sort out those details.

Respectfully,

Ryan S. Stechschulte
Treasurer/CFO