

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

September 17, 2019

A Need to Reform Academic Distress Commissions



INTERESTED PARTY TESTIMONY

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&

President of the Ohio Mid-Sized Urban Districts Leadership Collaborative

Chairwoman, Lehner, Vice Chair Terhar, Ranking Minority Member Fedor and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit interested party testimony for Sub H.B. 154 reforming Academic Distress Commissions. The proposed comprehensive and extensive modifications to the House-passed provisions regarding ADCs clearly demonstrates that the ADC model currently in law does not have strong legislative support.

In our June 24, 2019 correspondence we urged three points:

1. Eliminate the current state-takeover model;
2. Provide operational support to struggling schools; and
3. Accelerate the process for returning local control to the three exiting ADC schools.

After a review of Sub. H.B. 154, it appears we are betting 500.

Thank you for hearing us and agreeing to make necessary changes. However, we want to improve our batting average and therefore our counsel has submitted several “technical changes” along with two substantive amendments:

1. The State Department of Education needs to be a repository for collecting and organizing data on root causes for academic failures along with best practices for fixing or resolving those problems which will lead to improved academic performance. That information can then be shared with schools desiring to improve their academic performance. We can not let the consultants declare the information or remedies as proprietary or trade secrets.

2. We have adopted the Peer to Peer model for identifying root causes and offering suggestions for improved academic performance. Warrensville Heights moved from an “F” in 2016-2017 to a “C” in 2018-2019 in part by utilizing the Peer to Peer model to include instructional rounds.

Donald Jolly, the Superintendent of Warrensville Heights will highlight the steps employed to move his District from an “F” to a “C” in two years.

In conclusion, many of the provisions set forth in the proposed legislation could lead us to better policy initiatives for improving academic performance. We would

suggest there is a need to absorb the various suggestions you are receiving and to reflect and ensure the new structure works as intended. While we urge adoption of this ADC reform legislation this Fall, it does not have to be rushed through this month of September – we rushed H.B. 70, let's not make the same mistake twice.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions.