



Chairwoman Lehner, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to speak today. My name is John Guyer. I am the Chief Executive Officer of Summit Academy Management. Summit Academy Management is a nonprofit management company that operates 24 Summit Academy community schools throughout Ohio. With me today is Mark Michael, our Vice President of Operations and General Counsel. Due to the extraordinary circumstances the COVID-19 pandemic has posed on our K-12 community schools, we are here today to ask for temporary relief from statutory requirements that have been impacted for community schools that may wish to seek a contract with a new sponsor.

Our educational program and curriculum are designed to be a safe haven for children with learning challenges such as Autism, ADD, and ADHD. Over 70% of our students receive special education services. Our program, special services, highly skilled staff members and special programs such as Therapeutic Martial Arts all work to create a positive, encouraging, and helpful environment for our students.

As you know, all community schools must have a sponsor, which provides the school with oversight, monitoring, and technical assistance. A sponsor can be a key component in whether a school is successful. Ohio law allows community schools to seek a contract with a new sponsor. If a community school's academic performance is a D or F, the community school must receive approval to change sponsors from the Ohio Department of Education. Academic performance is a component used by the ODE in making its decisions. The Department will look at the last available report card in making its decisions.

With no report cards this year and in the next two years as proposed by this legislation, a community school's 2018-2019 report card will be preserved for transfer requests in the 2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024 school years. While a suspension of reports cards may be beneficial to some schools, it may preserve a negative effect for community schools that may wish to explore an option with a new sponsor.

We are requesting an amendment that would allow transfers during this time if the move was to a highly rated sponsor. Highly rated sponsors adhere to the highest standards of rigor as defined by the Ohio Department of Education. Application processes examine a school's academic performance, but also go much deeper into all aspects of the School and its Governing Authority's operations. The proposed amendment will provide "Safe Harbor" that the suspension of report cards is intended to provide. Thank you for your consideration of this request on behalf of community schools.



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