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Senate Bill 165
Sponsor Testimony

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 165.

Over the past several general assemblies, this committee has heard much testimony from community members affected by academic distress commissions. As it is currently written, Senate Bill 165 applies only to Lorain City Schools.

In March, Chairman Brenner joined me and other regional legislators in Lorain for a series of meetings with the education community. The local leaders demonstrated a strong partnership, as well as a culture of collaboration in seeking the mutual goal of returning control to the local school board.

In 2019, Lorain City Schools' report card showed improvement. An amendment dissolving any academic distress commission for a school that received an overall grade of "D" or higher was included in House Bill 9, which passed through the Senate last year before dying in conference committee. This bill recognizes the unique progress that Lorain has made, as well as the extensive plan they have formulated to help craft a pathway out of the control of the academic distress commission.

My office worked closely with Chairman Brenner's office and other interested parties in crafting this bill. We have taken steps to ensure that a level of assistance from the state remains. For example:

- The Auditor of State will complete a performance audit of school districts no less than 60 days following the bill's effective date and submit the results to the school district
- The local board of education will partner with stakeholders including the academic distress commission in formulating a three-year improvement plan for submission to the State Superintendent for review. The State Superintendent will then send the plan to the state school board for approval.
- While the district is implementing the approved improvement plan, the local school board reassumes all power granted to it under statutory law. The ADC continues to exist in an advisory role, but without any operational or managerial authority.

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor, thank you again for allowing me to testify on Senate Bill 165 today. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.