

**Andrew Boy, CEO**  
**United Schools Network**  
**Proponent Testimony – Senate Bill 240**  
**Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee**  
**December 14, 2021**

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in front of this committee again to lend the support of United Schools Network for Senate Bill 240. I am Andrew Boy, the Founder and CEO of USN. As a reminder of who we are, United Schools Network is a non-profit charter school system of four schools, each authorized by the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, serving kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students here in Columbus.

We are serving nearly 1,000 students this year in three of the most under-resourced neighborhoods in the city and nearly all our students come from economically disadvantaged homes. At USN, we work every day to provide each of these talented and unique students with an outstanding educational opportunity.

Our goal is nothing short of academic excellence and the proof can be seen in our results: students arrive at USN an average of 2-3 grade levels behind, and they grow 1½ - 2 grade levels each academic year. USN 8th graders have outperformed their district counterparts in every tested subject area. What we are doing is working and I am here today to ask for your support to modify Ohio law to provide more flexibility to operate what we already view as a network of schools.

The concept of a network can be found right in our name. From the day we opened our second building, we have viewed our schools as part of a single network with the same vision and mission. Unfortunately, Ohio law imposes structural requirements that make it challenging to operate as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Current Ohio law unnecessarily complicates even the most basic management process with cumbersome and bureaucratic mandates. Senate Bill 240 would provide additional flexibility in several key areas, and it would effectively allow USN to direct more of our limited resources to the classroom, where they are most needed.

For example, under SB 240 we would have the ability to move staff members more efficiently between schools when a need arises. We would also have more flexibility in utilizing funds to support schools within the network to target academic resources

where they are most needed or even manage something as basic as an unexpected maintenance or repair issue.

In addition to improved staffing opportunities and resource efficiency, we see an opportunity to make our governance structure more unified. Currently, we hold four school board meetings a month – often we are reviewing and approving the same or very similar policies across our four schools. This bill would allow us to hold a single board meeting each month – increasing efficiency and decreasing the opportunity for inconsistencies across schools.

We believe SB 240 would significantly improve our ability to manage our network of schools and we appreciate Senator Peterson's leadership in sponsoring this important legislation.

Chairman Brenner and members of the committee, thank you again for the opportunity to testify today, and I would be happy to answer any questions that you have.