Chairperson Lehner, Vice Chair Terhar, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the Senate Education Committee. Thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony. I am opposed to Academic Distress Commissions and the proposed change to a School Transformation Board.

My name is Patrick Schymanski. I am currently on the Elida Local Schools board and serve as Legislative Liaison. I am also a member of the National School Boards Association Legislative Advocacy Council.

I do understand and agree that schools roll is to educate our children and help them become full-fledged, participating citizens in our great country. Education is important not only for citizenship but also to help our youth adapt to this changing world. Our school board is very active in understanding our role, as elected officials, to monitor and help improve the academic process in our school system. This role is important to each board member and we all take this task seriously. But, we also struggle with poverty, trauma and dealing with difficult students.

My concern with Academic Distress Commissions and the proposed School Transformation Board is that the responsibility for success is placed on the school. If you look at Detroit, Milwaukee, Chicago, Nashville and the schools in Ohio under a CEO type leadership, you will not find one successful transformation. Data does show that community and especially parental support is key for improvement. Data also shows the impact that Trauma has on student learning.

Why are we just addressing schools when it takes a village to raise a child? Academic Distress Commissions, regardless of the name are concerned only with the school, not the community. From my point of view, where is the investment in the community, that is not a school’s role. It is not our role to solve poverty, deal with family disfunction or hunger.

I urge you to instead address the issues everyone is ignoring. The many problems that exist in the communities surrounding the struggling school systems. We must get to the root cause of a problem to solve it. Addressing a symptom does not fix the problem and only wastes money.

I urge you to move away from Academic Distress Commissions, School Transformation Boards and other proposals that address symptoms and help communities improve. I believe that difficult task will pay far more benefits than any of the proposed school transformation plans.

I know you face difficult task; we all want our education process to build healthy productive citizens.

Thank you for reading this.

Respectfully,

Patrick Schymanski
Legislative Liaison
Elida Local School Board member
NSBA Legislative Advocacy team