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Senate Finance Committee Testimony

Good afternoon, Chairman Dolan, Vice Chairman Burke, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, my name is Tim Tarvin, and I am the superintendent of the Shelby City School District.

I would like to thank the Committee for this opportunity to address SB 4 and how OFCC funding would impact my school district and community in a positive manner.

The Shelby City School District is located in Richland County, ten miles northwest of the city of Mansfield; Shelby's student enrollment in grades Preschool-12th grade is 2,052 students.

With a population of just under 10,000 residents, Shelby, like many small towns in Ohio, is composed of proud, hardworking citizens who strive every day to provide a good life for their family and children. However, in 2019 our community still struggles from the effects of the Great Recession of 2008 and economic hardship.

Shelby is in a challenging cycle; the poverty level in Shelby continues to increase, our population is aging, and like many small towns, Shelby struggles to attract businesses that could help break this cycle.

However, the Shelby City School District preaches "paying it forward" and we have dedicated ourselves to be an active partner with local businesses, locally elected officials, the Shelby Community Improvement Corporation, and the Richland County Development Corporation to foster and promote economic growth and workforce development in our community. We believe it is imperative for our District, staff, and students to be actively involved in our community in an effort to stem some of the downward trends Shelby has experienced.

As a District and community, we have high academic expectations for all of our students. We will not make excuses for our students, no matter their economic condition nor the state of disrepair of the school building in which they learn.

This, of course, is no small task under ideal conditions but consider that one of our elementary buildings was constructed during the Truman administration and the other during President Eisenhower's tenure, and it becomes acutely obvious that our current educational facilities are simply inadequate for 21st century learning.

We in Shelby are proud of the work that we do on a daily basis to promote and foster excellence among our students and the community as a whole. Part of that work is to attempt to provide our students with modern, 21st century facilities that would provide opportunities for success that 60-70 year old buildings simply cannot provide. To that end, five years ago, Shelby completed the first segment of our OFCC construction project and opened a beautiful 9-12 high school that is serving our students beyond expectation.

It is now the goal of our District to complete the second and final segment of our construction plan by constructing a PreK-8 facility. Shelby is a 50/50 district. That means that the OFCC pays 50% of the cost of construction, and Shelby pays the other 50%.

Thankfully, through fiscal diligence and conservative financial stewardship, the Shelby City School District has its finances well in order to fund our 50/50 share and build a PreK-8 school. This would allow the Shelby City School District the opportunity to complete the final phase of our OFCC construction and put our Preschool-8th graders in a building that would be designed for 21st century learning.

One last thought. A tenet that is one of our core beliefs in Shelby is, "You have to be willing to finance your expectations." On behalf of the Shelby City Schools and the other school districts that would be positively impacted, please consider passing Senate Bill 4 and provide the OFCC with the funding that would in turn, literally and figuratively, lay the foundation for success in 21st century facilities, not just in Shelby, but throughout other districts in Ohio.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you again for the opportunity to share Shelby City School District's story. My students, staff, community, and I appreciate your consideration in this tremendously important matter.

I would be happy to address any questions.

Thank you,

Tim Tarvin
Superintendent, Shelby City Schools