

Testimony on H.B 312
House Finance Committee
November 28, 2023

Chair Edwards, Vice-Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney and distinguished members of the House Finance Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony on the proposed regional partnership legislation.

My name is Susan Bodary and I am a partner at Education First, a national education policy and practice firm. Having worked in 20+ states since 2008, I am deeply familiar with both the research on collective action, site-based education networks and the efforts that promote. Prior to Education First, I helped found the Dayton Regional STEM School, STEM Center Professional development center for teachers served as the Education and Workforce Advisor to former Governor Bob Taft. I also helped found EdVention, which transformed into Learn to Earn Dayton, recognized by the StriveTogether Network as one of the country's premiere site-based education partnerships.

I am here to provide interested party testimony, sharing with you how H.B. 312 is unique, and why it is worth your consideration.

- **The language in the bill puts the focus on students, attainment and all of us working together to achieve results for and with them, and for and with employers.** It creates an environment where institutions are at the table but must be focused on the student data and how to impact it in a positive way together, as opposed to how each institution on its own will do work. This enables collaborative work, putting student outcomes at the center.
- **Site-based education partnerships empower families/students to take ownership of their learning** – they are designed to elevate family voice and foster enhanced student engagement. This active involvement creates a sense of ownership and engagement among families/students, empowering them to take charge of their learning journey.
- **These partnerships are designed to connect schools and communities, creating a supportive ecosystem for student success that extends beyond the classroom walls** -- they can bridge the gap between schools and the broader community, fostering partnerships with parents, local businesses, community organizations, and higher education institutions. These partnerships can provide students with additional resources, mentorship opportunities, and real-world connections that enhance their learning experiences and prepare them for future success.
- **Provide a collaborative platform to design and implement effective cross system collaboration and push our system forward. Significant innovation results.** This collaboration can ensure that students receive a cohesive and seamless educational experience that prepares them for both college and career success.
- **Site-based networks can serve as a vital catalyst for college and career pathways work in Ohio.** Supporting the implementation of site-based networks is to support a more equitable and empowering educational environment for all students.

There are numerous examples of successful site-based networks across the country, many such as the Commit Partnership in Dallas and the transformational work happening in Chattanooga, TN are effectively breaking down institutional silos that are not useful in getting the system outcomes we want for students. They also use common measures that guide their collective work, investment and results.

We need a vast amount of talent we need in Ohio's current and future workforce, and we have seen in Texas, Tennessee and other places that site-based education networks are making change happen. Because they have a neutral stance and are focused on student and workforce outcomes for a region – and are not specifically tied to institutional needs – they cause work, collaboration and expectations to change, resulting in different system behaviors and outcomes.

Working collectively, these networks accomplish more than working alone. With the State of Ohio as a partner – putting forward an expectation of utilizing best practices, and investing a small amount of state resources in the effort – will make these networks stronger, and make them significantly more competitive for public competitive grants and private investment.

Thank you.