

**Senate Education Committee**

**Senate Bill 216 Testimony**

**Joseph Spiccia Superintendent, Wickliffe City School District**

**Julie Ramos, Director of Strategic Innovation, Wickliffe City School District**

**Edward Klein, Assistant Superintendent, Chardon Local School District**

**Michael P. Hanlon, Jr., Superintendent, Chardon Local School District**

**November 8, 2017**

Chairperson Lehner, and Honorable Members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for allowing us to address you today. My name is Joseph Spiccia. I am the Superintendent of the Wickliffe City School District, and the Chair of the Lake/Geauga Superintendents' Collaborative representing 14 school districts in Lake and Geauga counties, and approximately 45,000 students. I am here to testify on behalf of the collaborative as a proponent of Senate Bill 216. With me today are three colleagues, Mrs. Julie Ramos, Director of Strategic Innovation for the Wickliffe Schools, Dr. Ed Klein, Assistant Superintendent of the Chardon Local Schools, and Dr. Michael Hanlon, Superintendent of the Chardon Local Schools. In addition, members of our collaborative representing several school districts in our area are also with us and listed in the written testimony for your reference.

**Dr. Josh Englehart, Assistant Superintendent, Painesville City Local Schools**

**Mr. Bill Wade, Superintendent, Kirtland Local Schools**

Mr. Bill Porter, Superintendent, Mentor Exempted Village Schools

Mrs. Angela Smith, Superintendent, Madison Local Schools

Senate Bill 216 offers some relief from a number of regulations related to compliance that create unnecessary burden for school districts and we advocate for those changes and recognize this as an opportunity to respond positively to the concerns that have been expressed by school leaders, teachers and other practitioners in the field related to how we can more effectively educate students in our schools. Specifically:

Recommended changes related to the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System are welcomed and appropriate.

From a student management perspective, we appreciate the bill's approach to not counting excused absences toward truancy and consolidating reporting requirements of all safety mandates into a single report to be filed annually.

Generally, the broad concepts in the bill are welcomed by our collaborative and we would like to offer some ideas and insights into particular features of the legislation.

It is my pleasure to introduce Mrs. Julie Ramos who will address some of our ideas.

Thank you, Joe.

In the area of College Credit Plus, we are recommending that the language in the legislation be written so that school districts have flexibility to require students to take CCP classes on campus rather than in district for practical

reasons such as scheduling conflicts, convenience, and safety. Further, we offer that rules regarding textbooks and supply fees be governed by local school district policy as each district has differing policies with regard to school fees. And finally, that districts not be responsible for costs of college coursework that does not lead to credit being transferred.

With regard to preschool operating standards, we are concerned that changing the ratio to 1:12 for four year olds will dramatically increase the costs of preschool units. We believe that preschool is critically important to students and we advocate for the expansion of preschool and such expansion needs to be done in a fiscally responsible manner and reducing ratios would make expansion a greater challenge for local school districts.

Thank you it is my pleasure to introduce Dr. Hanlon to you.

Thank you, Julie.

In relation to the changes proposed in Teacher Licensure and Aide Permits, we see many positives that will permit us to operate districts more efficiently. It is important to understand that our school districts strive to place the most qualified personnel working with our students, but limitations of the marketplace and the existing licensure structure sometimes impact our efforts to secure qualified personnel. We do believe that caution in the form of additional guidance be applied in cases of Superintendent waiver of licensure to ensure that the intent of the law is not compromised.

The implementation of licensure using two grade bands is a positive move and will allow districts increased flexibility to place the most-qualified teachers into assignments where the needs of students can be met. We do offer that it may have been an unintended oversight to exclude PK

licensure from the initial discussion and suggest that the appropriate structure might include PK-6 as the range for the lower grade band.

While we also support the elimination of the 30-hour professional development requirement for teachers of gifted students, we want to emphasize that we believe strongly in professional development for teachers of all students, and that districts, within their limited means, should be expected to provide professional development that meets the needs of every learner. Given the amount of additional training contemplated in a number of areas, meeting this standard seems unattainable for most districts. Further, all teachers with gifted licensure are already required to meet a 6-hour licensure renewal requirement. By directing that this professional development be completed in gifted education, this objective could be completed without further mandate.

It is a pleasure to introduce Dr. Ed Klein of the Chardon Schools who will address issues related to accountability.

Thank you Mike.

A wide range of changes in State testing and school/district accountability have been proposed in the legislation and have the potential to improve not only the implementation of assessments, but also their use in improving instruction for all students which should be our primary focus. Particular points worth noting in this portion of the bill are:

1. The maintenance of the reported group N-size of 30 students. We are all focused on ensuring high achievement for every student, and the group size of 30 seems appropriate not only from an accountability standpoint, but also from a statistical reliability approach where

districts will be affected on their report card by increased statistical variability and increased standard error of measurement inherent in smaller sample sizes; and,

2. The availability of paper/pencil assessments may create an apples to oranges comparison dilemma unless assessments in both formats can be demonstrated to be statistically reliable and equivalent. We recognize the issues that some districts face in completing online assessments, but also urge caution insofar as ensuring that equivalent forms of assessment are indeed equivalent, and
3. We applaud recommendations to increase the level of diagnostic reporting to schools. As school leaders, we recognize the importance of being accountable to our communities for high levels of student achievement and maintain a strong focus on the four E's of student success- Employability, Enrollment, Enlistment and Entrepreneurship. We understand that one primary driver of the movement to online testing was the ability to score assessments more accurately and provide results - including specific performance data such as item analysis - to school districts and teachers. In order for us to meet our obligation of accountability, it is critical for us to have accurate and timely assessment diagnostics in order to inform instruction.

Chairperson Lehner, thank you for this opportunity to offer this testimony, we are pleased that the legislature is considering SB 216 as a mechanism for addressing a wide range of issues impacting the management and operation of school districts in Ohio and see many of the proposed changes as positive steps in enhancing our ability to deliver high quality education to

our students and communities. We stand ready to respond to questions at the pleasure of the chair.

###