

Before I begin...

I'd like to thank the members of this committee for allowing me to speak today.

I have put together a folder of resources for your consideration related to the topics I'm about to discuss and the points that I plan on bringing to your attention.

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- I am here today representing my school district and many other people.
- I am testifying today to make 2 requests:
  - Please require Ohio to change its ESSA plan submission from April to September.
  - Use that time to work with Ohioans to create a high quality, flexible and responsible accountability plan.
  
- I have worked in public education for 23 years. I've been a: school psychologist; a Director of Student Services and an Assistant Superintendent in charge of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.
  
- 4 years ago I became the superintendent of the Olmsted Falls City School District. I'd describe my responsibilities as this: ***I'm in charge of cultivating a system and organization that seeks to INSPIRE and EMPOWER about 4,000 students so that they can be ready for whatever next steps they may take after their K-12 education.***

- Ohio's current accountability system and that which has been proposed through Ohio's ESSA Draft, makes my job of INSPIRING and EMPOWERING very difficult--high stakes tests run contrary to my district's vision for students.
  
- Ohio's proposed Plan did not take full advantage of the "greater flexibility and decision-making" that was offered to Ohioans.
  
- For the past 6 months I have been relentless with organizing a movement to advocate for something other than a test and score system for Ohio's students because we think Ohioans deserve better.
  
- It began with challenging Ohio's graduation point system that was broken before it was implemented and it continues with Ohio's ESSA plan.
  
- Did you know that the top 5 skills needed in 2020 according to the Future of Jobs Report from the World Economic Forum include:
  - Complex problem solving
  - Critical Thinking
  - Creativity
  - People Management
  - Coordinating with Others

- In my mind it would follow that if this is what is needed, (and I have no reason to believe it isn't), one should work to create policy that can leverage the learning conditions needed in order for those in charge of the instruction to incorporate these skills.
- Ohio should use the opportunity that ESSA provides to engage all stakeholders to create an innovative and flexible Plan, as opposed to the No Child Left Behind 2.0 plan that has been proposed.
- Some of my colleagues and I in Northeastern Ohio met, and based on that discussion, I authored a White Paper that I provided to every member of the Ohio School Board and the Reps and Senators that sit on the Education Committee. I'm providing you a copy in your packet today.
- The White Paper identifies issues from those of us that work in the field and it offers suggestions to improve Ohio's Plan. In order to begin to consider those recommendations, it will require changes to Ohio law.
- Several of my colleagues and I began holding information sessions across the state in order to inform the public and seek their input on Ohio's Plan.

- I sit before you today respectfully asking for ***your support, your courage*** and ***your leadership***.

### ***What is wrong with Ohio's ESSA Plan?***

- If you're a Republican:
  - Ohio's ESSA plan represents an over-reach of government into the schools through the assessment system. Those that recommended the plan to you created another layer of bureaucratic control through over-testing.
  - It advocates the continued spending of resources on 7 tests that aren't required by the Federal law
- If you're a Democrat:
  - It harms students through over-testing. Those 7 assessments cost 3 hours of instructional time per test and force teachers to teach to an additional 7 tests.
- If you see the reasons I described as non-partisan, then I believe we have common ground.
- There are other methods to obtain the kind of assurances elected officials need in order to determine that the state's resources are being invested wisely.

- Examples might include course audits to ensure the proper curriculum, instruction and assessment experiences are taking place; or
- An Ohio school accreditation system for schools and districts to provide assurances that high and attainable expectations for students occur in non-tested subjects once Ohio reduces testing to the Federal minimums.
  
- Ohio's proposed plan ignores the thousands of data points that were provided from people representing every county in our state.
  
- Its lack of ambition and creativity demonstrate to me that it was written by a person or a group of people that do not understand those things that I've spent the last 25 years of my life studying. It proves to me that those that created the plan have likely never worked in a classroom, in a school building or at the district level office.
  
- It presents an illogical School Quality metric that not only lacks innovation, but it measures nothing about the quality of a school because it doesn't seek to require evidence on those variables most strongly related to school quality.
  - Rather, it has districts reporting on student discipline and chronic absenteeism--these are factors closely correlated to socio-economic status and family variables.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Do not submit Ohio's plan on April 3. Move the submission date to September and allow more time for this plan to be developed based on those things that Ohioans indicated they wanted.
2. Create an accountability system with flexibility because it will leverage responsibility.
3. Create an accountability system grounded in the components from the National Conference of State Legislatures (these are in your packet)
4. Change Ohio Law and take advantage of the reduction in testing from the Feds.
  - a. If you need assurance, then consider creating an Ohio school accreditation system for schools and districts to provide evidence that high and attainable expectations for students exist in non-tested subjects once Ohio reduces testing to the Federal minimums.
5. Create a statewide report card system that is more descriptive and less confusing than the A - F system currently in place.

6. Support local differentiation that achieves statewide goals.
7. Set high, attainable expectations for our students.
8. Empower local improvement through collaboration & innovation.
9. Balance accountability and support.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. James L. Lloyd

Superintendent for the Olmsted Falls City School District