



Revised and Final
Testimony for the Senate Education Finance Subcommittee

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Terry Ryan, Vice-President for Ohio Programs and Policy
The Thomas B. Fordham Institute

Dear Chairman Gardner, Vice Chair Lehner, Ranking Member Turner, other members of the subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today with my colleagues who are running some of the very best public schools in Ohio, and with my friend Greg Harris from StudentsFirst.

My name is Terry Ryan and I am vice-president for the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, a policy research group with offices in Columbus, Dayton and Washington, DC. We promote education reform of all stripes, with a particular focus on school choice and standards-based reform. Our sister organization, The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, has been a state-approved charter school authorizer since 2004, and we currently authorize 11 schools across the state (including some of the schools testifying here today). I am also a Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution.

I believe charter schooling done well is one of the most important school reform strategies for our state and for our nation. I say that based on the academic results of schools like DECA in Dayton, Breakthrough in Cleveland, and KIPP and United Schools Network in Columbus. These schools prove that really good schools make a difference, particularly for poor and disadvantaged youngsters whose life prospects need a boost beyond what their families and neighborhoods can supply.

There are others like them, and we have highlighted some of these high-need, high-achieving schools in our reports on *Needles in a Haystack: Lessons from Ohio's high-performing urban high schools*.

Bottom line, far too many of our neediest children attend sub-par schools. To remedy this tragedy I strongly encourage you and your colleagues to support policies that will help these high-performing schools, and others like them, expand their numbers and expand the number of students they serve. There is no more important public policy, nor no better investment, than assisting the high-achieving schools testifying in front of you here today.

Fordham has long advocated for choice matched by accountability for performance. We believe charters deserve the same funding as district schools, but only if they are delivering academic results over time. The schools you are hearing from today are delivering and deserve support to enable them to do more for their students and their communities. Thank you Chairman Gardner, and other members of the subcommittee, for the opportunity to speak with you today and take whatever questions you may have.