

Testimony on House Sub Bill 59-Biennial Budget

Education Finance Subcommittee, State Senator Randy Gardner, Chair

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Good morning Chairman Gardner, Vice Chair Lehner, Ranking Minority Member Turner and members of the Education Finance Subcommittee. My name is Hannah Powell, and I am the Executive Director of KIPP Central Ohio. An Ohio-Native, I became acutely aware the inequities facing young in our country during my two years as a Teach For America Corps Member in Philadelphia, PA. Motivated by the belief that all kids can and will learn, I returned to Ohio, and have been apart of KIPP for the last five years, serving as School Leader of KIPP Journey Academy, and now as the Executive Director of KIPP Central Ohio; leading our organization's effort to expand to serve close to 2000 kids in grades K-12 by the end of the decade.

KIPP is a national network of free, open-enrollment, college-preparatory public schools with a track record of preparing students in underserved communities for success in college and life. Locally, we currently have one middle school serving over 300 students in grades 5-8 and our mission is college completion for 100% of our KIPPsters. Over 90% of our students come from economically disadvantaged households and often come to us 3-4 grade levels behind their peers. Throughout the course of our program, our students grow as scholars and as people. For the past two years we have been rated Effective, outperforming Columbus City Schools and our 8th graders bested the state average in both Science and Math (missing outperformance in reading by 1%). Exceeding state level expectations for growth for the past four years, KIPP Journey Academy was also recognized nationally as an EPIC Award Winning School for making extraordinary gains in urban education.

As we seek to get better for each of our kids, it is critically important for us to have the space and resources to innovate. The Straight A Fund provides us a strong access point to secure resources that will be catalytic in preparing more of our KIPPsters to be college and career ready. Competing for dollars to enhance programming for our kids is a welcomed opportunity, but it is my hope that we will not have to continue competing for dollars for basic operating needs like facilities in the future. The new allocation of \$100 per student for facilities is a step, but additional investments in this area are key to our ability to replicate high performing schools in our State.

Thank you for your time and for all of the work you do on behalf of kids and families throughout Ohio. Support for the Straight A Fund and increased facilities dollars for community schools will ensure that more kids in our communities will have access to the quality education they deserve.