

John Kasich, Governor Michael L. Sawyers, Acting Superintendent of Public Instruction

Testimony on House Bill 59 - Biennial Budget February 28, 2013

Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, Representative Bill Hayes, Chair Finance and Appropriations Committee, Ohio House of Representatives

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Chairman Hayes, Ranking Member Lundy and members of the Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the Executive Budget on issues related to educational data systems and Ohio's Education Management Information System (EMIS). My name is David Ehle, and I am the Director of the Education Management Information System at the Ohio Department of Education (ODE).

Educational Data Systems Overview

Ohio has an ambitious agenda to continue to enhance its education data system over the next two years. Access to high-quality data is critical for advancing educational reforms and a comprehensive P-20 statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS) will allow Ohio to track the progress of its students from early childhood to K-12, through postsecondary education and beyond. An SLDS will capture data on students as they transition from early childhood programs to kindergarten, and move from one grade to the next, measuring whether they are on track to graduate, and demonstrating whether K-12 schools are preparing their students to succeed in college and the workforce.

Though Ohio is already recognized as a national leader in collecting detailed academic, operational and financial data in K-12 education, the P-20 SLDS project is advancing the system to the next level by connecting Ohio's K-12 data with both data maintained for higher education and with data maintained for early childhood programs provided by other state agencies. Creating a comprehensive SLDS is a logistical and technical challenge for any state and Ohio has already made substantial progress through interagency cooperation and authorization of the connection between K-12 and higher education data systems through House Bill 290 of the 128th General Assembly in 2009 and with early childhood programs through Senate Bill 316 of the 129th General Assembly in 2012. The SLDS initiative includes the implementation of a cross agency governance structure and will maintain compliance with both state and federal privacy laws. Today I will focus on the K-12 data component of the P-20 SLDS - the Education Management Information System (EMIS). EMIS is the source of the K-12 education data in the SLDS and was recently re-designed as the first phase of Ohio's multi-year P-20 SLDS strategy.

Ohio Education Management Information System - EMIS

First established in 1989, EMIS is the state's primary data collection system for K-12 students, staff, financial, program and course data. EMIS collects demographic and employment data for approximately 125,000 teachers, including teaching assignments and course codes; demographic, performance, program and course data for 1.8 million students; and data on approximately 3,700 public educational facilities. In addition to the basic data collection and reporting functions mandated by both state and federal legislation, EMIS provides the critical data needed to determine school district eligibility for funding and facilitate the accurate and timely distribution of state and federal payments to school

districts. EMIS also serves as the mechanism for school districts to report assessment results, attendance data and graduation data – the core of the state's performance accountability system.

The collection of unidentifiable individual student information through EMIS via a unique data verification code known as the Statewide Student ID (or SSID) allows the state to measure student growth and calculate value-added measures. Through the SSID, data collected through EMIS is now being linked with data maintained by the Board of Regents through their Higher Education Information System and is being used to create the P-20 SLDS data repository. Additionally, an initiative funded by Ohio's federal Race to the top Early Learning Challenge Grant is in progress to assign SSIDs to early learning child data maintained by other state agencies. This will facilitate the sharing and linking of data between agencies for longitudinal analysis of program effectiveness.

Using the SSID to integrate early childhood, K-12, and higher education data will mark a significant milestone in Ohio's effort to better understand the impacts of education on students. It also points out one of the significant challenges that ODE faces within EMIS. As recently noted by the Auditor of State Dave Yost, Ohio is one of only two states where the state does not have access to K-12 student names. In Ohio, both the Board of Regents and the early learning state agencies have access to name and other personally identifiable information that is used to match students to an SSID. Allowing ODE to have access to this information as well would improve the matching of data between early learning, K-12, and higher education in addition to allowing ODE to improve its monitoring of K-12 data reported by districts.

During the 2011-2012 school year, ODE implemented a modernized EMIS to school districts and community schools. The new redesigned EMIS was developed primarily through ODE's first SLDS competitive grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Ohio has been awarded three SLDS grants since the grant program was instituted in 2005. In addition to the EMIS redesign work, funding from the SLDS grants is being used to support the electronic sharing of high school transcripts with universities and the development of Ohio's P-20 repository. This data system work is complimented by Ohio's Race to the Top (RttT) state scope of work, which focuses on using data to improve instruction as one of the four assurance areas. Work through RttT includes such projects as improving teacher access to real-time student data through an Instructional Improvement System which will be implemented during the 2013-2014 school year. The remainder of these SLDS grants (line items 200628 and 200655) will be used in FY 2014 and Ohio's federal RttT grant will end in September of 2014 (within line item 200665).

Redesigning EMIS has been a major undertaking involving hundreds of educators and information technology professionals around the state. The new EMIS utilizes key improvements over the current system:

- 1. School districts are now able to report information multiple times per week rather than once per week. This is crucial during reporting periods with legislatively mandated tight deadlines and allows data errors to be resolved in a timely manner.
- 2. Adopting the School Interoperability Framework, an internationally recognized standard, facilitates efficient sharing of K-12 data among the different applications that districts already use.
- 3. SSIDs can be automatically assigned when a new student enrolls, allowing each district's local Student Information System to retrieve an SSID automatically with no user intervention required.
- 4. EMIS information is now housed at ODE in a powerful new database, allowing for better analysis.

Additionally, the new EMIS offers efficiencies for LEAs using the system:

- 1. A flexible web-based interface is more user-friendly and requires less training to use.
- 2. The investment in new infrastructure provides the foundation for future electronic data initiatives, such as the electronic exchange of student records between districts.
- 3. The flexibility of the new system will enable ODE to utilize the system for additional data collection needs and eliminate the need for separate data collection applications.

The Executive Budget (line 200446) proposes flat-funding for EMIS in both fiscal years of the biennium. ODE believes that the funding level proposed for EMIS operations will be sufficient to support ongoing maintenance of the system.

eTech Ohio Commission

In addition to funding for EMIS operations, the Executive Budget abolishes the eTech Ohio Commission and merges its duties and personnel with those of ODE and the Board of Regents. The responsibilities of the E-Rate program, the Ed-tech subsidy program, and professional development for school district personnel on the use of education technology are transferred to ODE. The Executive Budget includes two GRF line items (200464, General Technology Operations, and 200465, Technology Integration and Professional Development) and one non-GRF line item (200668, Gates Foundation Grants) in ODE's budget associated with these new responsibilities.

Chairman Hayes, Ranking Member Lundy and members of the Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, this concludes my testimony. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.