Ohio | Department of Education

John Kasich, Governor
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Testimony on House Bill 153 - Biennial Budget
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Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, Representative John Carey, Chair
Finance and Appropriations Committee, Ohio House of Representatives

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Chairman Carey, Ranking Member Lundy and members of the Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the Governor's Executive Budget on issues related to educational data systems and Ohio's Education Management Information System (EMIS). My name is Beth Juillerat, and I am the Chief Information Officer at the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and am overseeing the implementation of Ohio's Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS).

Educational Data Systems Overview

Ohio has an ambitious agenda to enhance its data system over the next four years. Access to high-quality data is critical for advancing educational reforms, and a comprehensive statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS) will allow Ohio to track the progress of its students from early childhood through postsecondary education and beyond. An SLDS will capture data on students as they 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 SLDS project will connect Ohio's K-12 information system with data systems maintained for higher education, workforce and other state agencies, while maintaining compliance with federal privacy laws. 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 HB 290 in 2009. Today I will focus on one of the core components of the SLDS, the redesign of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) by the Ohio Department of Education. It will be the first phase completed in the multi-year plan for Ohio's P-20 SLDS project, and provides the foundation for the future SLDS data repository.

Ohio Education Management Information System - EMIS

First established in 1989, EMIS is the state's primary data collection system for K-12 student, staff, financial, program and course data. EMIS collects demographic and employment data for 126,479 teachers, including teaching assignments and course codes; demographic, performance, program and course data for 1.8 million students; and data on 3,686 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 will be able to be linked with data maintained by the Board of Regents through their Higher Education Information System in order to create the SLDS data repository.

In October 2011, ODE will introduce a modernized EMIS to local school districts and community schools (known as local educational agencies or LEAs). The new redesigned EMIS was developed primarily through funding from a $5.7 million competitive U.S. Department of Education SLDS grant. Ohio is one of only eight states to have 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 will support the development of electronic records exchange between LEAs, the electronic sharing of high school transcripts with universities and the development of Ohio's P-20 repository. This data system work will be 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.

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. Local education agencies (LEAs) will be able to report information multiple times per week rather than once per week. This will be crucial during year-end reporting periods and will allow 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 LEAs already use.
3. Statewide Student Identifiers (SSIDs) will be automatically assigned when a new student enrolls, allowing each LEA's local Student Information System to retrieve an SSID automatically with no user intervention required.
4. EMIS information will be housed at ODE in a powerful new database, allowing for better analysis.

Additionally, the new EMIS will offer 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) funds EMIS at $6,833,070 in both years of the biennium, 42.7% less than the FY2011 funding level. Most of this reduction is comprised of repurposing the EMIS subsidy, now used to partially reimburse school districts and other educational entities for their data reporting costs, and moving that funding to support state foundation aid to schools. Within the EMIS line item, the Executive Budget also includes a 10% decrease for support to information technology centers (ITCs) for their EMIS responsibilities, and a modest reduction in funding for ODE EMIS operations. ODE believes that the funding level proposed for EMIS operations will be sufficient to support ongoing maintenance of the system in FY2012-13.

Chairman Carey, 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.