



House Education and Career Readiness Committee

Opponent Testimony on HB 176

Oct. 24, 2017

Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Education and Career Readiness Committee, thank you for hearing my testimony on House Bill 176. I am Melissa Cropper, President of the Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT). OFT represents more than 15,000 active and retired teachers, paraprofessionals, nurses, bus drivers, higher education staff and faculty, and public employees.

I am here today to specifically oppose Section 3301.079 that requires the State Board of Education to adopt new academic content standards prior to June 30, 2018, and further states that these standards should be consistent with and as identical as possible with the standards in place in Massachusetts prior to 2010.

The current Ohio Learning Standards were first adopted in 2010 and recently went through a revision process with the revised standards being approved by the State Board of Education in February 2017.

The Ohio Federation of Teachers participated in the review process both through online commenting and through representatives on the review teams. These representatives read through every single comment that was submitted and worked with the Ohio Department of Education to revise the standards to make them reflect the input of Ohioans and identify the knowledge and skills we have chosen for our students.

The standards do not tell educators “how” to educate students. That is left to educators in districts, schools and classrooms.

To people who are not in classrooms, changing the standards might seem like simply changing words on paper. For our educators, it is not so simple. Changes in standards means identifying what those changes are, finding the right resources to reflect the changes, realigning curriculum to make sure the standards are being taught at the appropriate grade level, changing teaching strategies, etc. In other words, it is not a simple overnight change. The changes that occurred with the adoption of new standards in 2010 required extensive professional development in

order to be implemented fully because they shifted learning from learning basic facts to deeper understanding of material. This meant implementing different teaching strategies that engaged students in understanding concepts and deeper meaning. Our teachers embraced these changes and have since been focused on continuing to move our students ahead.

Changing the standards again, especially going backwards to standards written by another state and since discarded, would only move us backwards by throwing another disruption in the learning process.

Instead of changing standards again and spending the time to learn and implement the new standards, our teachers need to be focused on continuing to develop more teaching strategies, working with each other on best practices for teaching current standards, sharing data and discussing ways to move student achievement forward, bringing in community resources to both address student needs and to enhance the curriculum. In other words, there is a lot of work to be done to continue to grow what we do to help students. Changing the standards will not do anything to move the needle, at least not in a positive direction. All it will do is create another distraction that will keep us from focusing on meeting the needs of our students.

I urge you to oppose changing the standards. Thank you. I will be glad to answer any questions you may have.