



**House Education Committee
Proponent Party HB 540 Testimony
Melissa Cropper, President
Ohio Federation of Teachers
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Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Education Committee, my name is Melissa Cropper, and I am President of the Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT). OFT represents 15,000 teachers, para-professionals in rural and urban locals across the state.

OFT supports the changes to the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES) that are contained in the Senate Education Committee version of SB 216. SB 216 language passed the Education Committee and Senate unanimously. Changing the language in HB 540 to match the Senate will help expedite any further action should that be needed.

Ohio teachers are currently working under an evaluation system that uses testing data in an inappropriate and ineffective way to evaluate teachers by counting test results as a percentage of a teacher's evaluation. Until very recently, that use was mandated from a federal level. In the most recent reauthorization of ESEA, now known as ESSA, the federal government prohibited the United States Department of Education from interfering in state decisions about how to evaluate teachers. With that mandate being lifted, Ohio had the opportunity to re-evaluate its system and to use evidence-based research to inform its process.

Last year, the Educators Standards Board, comprised of teachers, principals, superintendents, school board members, parents, and professors studied the issue and made recommendations on how to change OTES to make it a better evaluation tool. A key component of those recommendations is to embed student growth into the rubric instead of using it as a percentage of an evaluation. Embedding it in the rubric means that evaluators will look at how well teachers understand their testing data and how they are using it to inform instruction. This is a much deeper analysis of how well a teacher is performing.

OFT and the Cleveland Teachers Union (CTU) support this type of evaluation process. In fact, CTU worked with the district to develop its current 22-point rubric, a rubric that is even more thorough than what is recommended by the ESB, and has offered to sign an MOU agreeing to not only keep that rubric, but to update it by embedding student growth measures within it. The district, however, has not responded to that offer and is asking the legislature to allow them to keep using test scores in a way that experts within this state and across the nation have said is an ineffective and inappropriate way to use testing data. To be clear, the only reason testing data was ever included in the Cleveland teacher evaluation process as a percentage was because state law mandated it, not because it was mutually decided at a local level that it was an effective way to evaluate teachers.

Students in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District continue to move on an upward trajectory because of the daily efforts of teachers. An evaluation system that focuses on daily practice and use of data to inform instruction, instead of on improper use of data, will help the teachers and the district continue this progress. SB 216 provides that opportunity. We urge you to change the OTES language in HB 540 to match SB 216.

This concludes my testimony and I welcome any questions.