



The OEA will lead the way for continuous improvement of public education while advocating for members and the learners they serve.

OHIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

SB 216 - House Education Committee June 26, 2018

WRITTEN OPPONENT TESTIMONY

Good afternoon Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the House Education Committee. My name is Matthew Dotson, with the Ohio Education Association's (OEA) Government Relations Division. Thank you for the opportunity to provide SB 216 testimony on behalf of the OEA's 125,000 members serving Ohio's students as teachers and education support professionals.

SB 216 is a wide-ranging bill with numerous policy proposals that impact educators and students. OEA has a variety of positions on specific provisions in the bill.

This testimony will focus on recent amendments accepted by the House Education Committee or potential amendments still under consideration:

- **Teaching out of licensure area; supplemental license:** The House Education Committee amendment regarding supplemental licenses for teaching out of licensure area is a significant improvement from prior language in the bill dealing with teacher assignment in grades and/or subjects for which they are not licensed. The supplemental licensure approach provides educators and their employers with needed flexibility.
- **Core subject areas – Licensure/certification requirements for teachers and educational aides/paraprofessionals:** The House Education Committee amendment regarding licensure/certification requirements for teachers and educational aides/paraprofessionals in core subject areas (i.e. reading and English language arts, math, science, social studies, foreign languages, and fine arts) made important improvements to prior language in the bill, particularly as it pertains to qualifications for educational aides/paraprofessionals. This amendment protects the interests of students.
- **Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES) reforms:** OEA supports the House Education Committee amendment clarifying the primary role of the state board of education in revising the OTES framework and requiring at least one public hearing. This amendment will improve the transparency of the OTES reform process.
- **Paper format of third-grade English and math assessments –** OEA supports the House Education Committee amendment allowing the third-grade English language arts and/or math assessment to be administered in paper format. This amendment will help address concerns that testing format may influence testing outcomes for some students.

- **Alternative resident educator licensure pilot program:** OEA encourages efforts to create high-quality alternative pathways to the teaching profession. However, the recent amendment allowing approval of a national “teacher preparation program” vendor to operate in Ohio as a pilot program is a risky and unnecessary method. OEA opposes this pilot project provision. Nationalized vendors promoting themselves as “teacher preparation programs” often turn out to be low-quality, quick-fix options that focus more on test prep than teacher prep. These vendors typically appeal to states that lack an established infrastructure of high-quality teacher preparation/pedagogical training programs. That is not the case in Ohio.
- **Moratorium on state takeovers of districts entering Academic Distress (ADC) status:** The OEA supports the amendment under consideration that would implement a moratorium on ADC state takeovers of school districts. There appears to be broad consensus that Ohio’s state report cards are providing misleading information about school district performance. It makes sense to put a moratorium in place until report cards are reformed in a meaningful way. Further, the accumulating scientific and policy research is expanding our understanding of the many ways poverty creates complex barriers to learning. Strategic, student-focused services and interventions can help alleviate the symptoms of poverty that create barriers to learning. In contrast, Ohio’s state takeover law is focused on intervening with local school governance. Now is a good time to hit the pause button and reassess.
- **Teacher and school employee sick leave protections eliminated from Ohio law:** OEA strongly opposes the amendment under consideration that would remove teacher and school employee sick leave guarantees from Ohio law. The teachers and school employees serving Ohio’s students across the state should not have to beg and cajole for basic employment rights like sick leave. This proposed amendment is a SB 5-like attack on public employees.
- **License requirements to teach dance, drama, music or visual arts:** OEA supports the amendment under consideration that would require teachers of dance, drama, music, or visual arts to hold a multi-age Pre-K to 12th grade license issued to teacher in the specified subject area. This proposed amendment protects the interests of student in high-quality instruction in these important and specialized subject areas.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and concerns.

