

4643 Teller Street
Columbus, OH 43228
June 17, 2019

The Ohio House of Representatives Economic Development, Primary and Secondary Education Committee, 77 S. High St., Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chair Blessing III, Vice Chair Jones, and Distinguished Committee Members:

House Bill 165 would introduce health education standards to the state of Ohio, with the intention of those standards being made available to schools. My main contention with HB 165 is that it already appears that the Ohio Department of Education offers information on these standards on its website, easily accessible to all schools, educators, parents, and students. Why, then, would the bill be necessary?

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Health-Education>

Other concerns involve the bill setting the stage for more sweeping requirements for health education in the future. First, standards are legislated but optional, then standards become testable curriculum, with valuable time children need to expand on their own strengths and interests being further eroded. We live in Southwestern City Schools district, which has recently built many new schools. I have watched each school be built with enormous buildings and ample technology and tiny playgrounds. A call to the district was answered with excuses about liability for playground accidents. I know from experience how much time has been cut for recess and arts and anything not testable or covered by standards. These cuts are making it more difficult for children to learn by doing and to have outlets to decompress, reset, experience natural physical activity, and practice real social skills. Adding more standards does not solve these issues.

In her sponsor testimony, Rep. Liston mentioned Ohio's rank in terms of health values, as well as specific issues like smoking and obesity. She failed to mention that drug deaths are the measure that pulls Ohio down the most and for which it ranks 48th among all states. Nor does she mention the fact that, compared with other states, Ohio has good insurance coverage and many primary care physicians. We all are well aware by now that physicians have been part of the problem with opioid addiction, subject to intense and misinforming marketing practices by manufacturers. In fact, under the watch of Ohio's many primary care physicians and pediatricians, the health of our children has continued to degrade with serious chronic mental, physical, and emotional health issues increasing. I do not recall the amount of illness and disability among our

young Ohioans when I was in school, and I was one of few students who had a disability. The development of intensive health standards does not seem to have positively affected outcomes. Perhaps, standards are not what is needed or they are missing the actual issues.

<https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/Overall/state/OH>

I would ask all committee members to consider the following concerns in their vote on this bill:

- Who developed these standards and with what funding and input?
 - The American Association for Health Education has a very small page with basic information. The link to their URL sends visitors to an unowned domain. <http://www.cnheo.org/aahe.htm>
 - To whom do these standards developers answer? What is the process for public input and feedback? What input from industry happens and how are potential conflicts of interest handled? How do these standards address very specific differences in family health and values practices?
- What difference in what is currently provided will happen at the Ohio Department of Education? If it is truly an optional issue, then why does it need to be mandated? Have bill sponsors and cosponsors considered that anything placed in legislation such as this can be very much a product of the culture in which it is introduced and may be used for undesired purposes in the future?
- What valuable time would be taken in adopting these standards and communicating them to the schools? There seems to be no process established for that, or accountability, so is this really necessary?

I believe that most of these questions cannot be answered positively or adequately at this point, and for that reason, I encourage you to vote no to HB 165. Thank you for your consideration of the many issues that affect health education standards.

Sincerely,

Donna Jo Kazee