



## Proponent Testimony – Senate Bill 241 Senate Education Committee April 12, 2016

Good afternoon Chair Lehner, Ranking Member Sawyer, and members of the Senate Education Committee. My name is Scott DiMauro. I am a high school social studies teacher from the Worthington City School District currently serving as Vice President of the Ohio Education Association. This testimony is also on behalf of the following organizations:

- Ohio Alliance for Arts Education
- Ohio Music Education Association
- Ohio Art Education Association
- Ohio Educational Library Media Association
- Ohio Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance
- Ohio Federation of Teachers
- Ohio Association of School Nurses
- National Association of Social Workers – Ohio Chapter

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of Senate Bill 241.

Our organizations welcome the introduction of Senate Bill 241, a bill that supports a complete education provided by professionally licensed and certified individuals for Ohio's K-12 students. Senate Bill 241 is a legislative response to the State Board of Education's 2015 elimination of the "5 of 8 Rule" in the Operating Standards for Ohio Schools. Prior to its elimination, this rule provided clear but flexible staffing ratios to ensure there were appropriate educational professionals in every district. These ratios were used for school counselors, nurses, library media specialists, social workers, and elementary teachers of the arts, music and physical education.

Senate Bill 241 states that Ohio's K-12 students should have access to a complete curriculum, including the fine arts, music and physical education as well as comprehensive services provided by school nurses, social workers, library/media specialists and counselors. These positions are critical so that every district is able to meet the needs of students.

Additionally, the bill requires the reporting of public data, greater transparency and accountability. Without mandating specific hiring, Senate Bill 241 identifies a minimum staffing ratio to which schools should aspire. It is our understanding that the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) is already collecting this data. The bill will simply require ODE to report it.

Senate Bill 241 is aligned to ASCD's (formerly the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) recent *Global Recommendations* that call for a comprehensive education system. This includes student access to a well-rounded education in all subject areas, social emotional learning, health, mental health and counseling services.

The provisions of the bill also align with the recent re-authorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, known as the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* that also calls for a well-rounded education for all students. The data reporting requirement in this bill supports local control, as only a community that has easy access to accurate data about its schools can make informed and logical decisions in setting priorities for those schools.

In a major piece of research published this month, Americans for the Arts reported an overwhelming majority of the American public (89%) agrees that the arts should be a part of a well-rounded education (including 55% who "strongly agree" vs. just 7% who "disagree"). Approximately ninety percent (90%) of American adults believe it is important for students to receive an education in the arts – including dance, visual art, theatre and music – as part of the curriculum in elementary (88%), middle (90%) and high school (89%) years.

It is imperative that Ohio establish minimum standards that ensure all of Ohio's students have the support they need for a high quality education. We thank Senator LaRose for his leadership on this issue and would be happy to respond to any questions you may have.