



## **Cloverleaf Local Schools**

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### **Proponent Testimony – HB 591**

From Daryl Kubilus Jr., Ed.D.  
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Chairman Brenner, Vice-Chair Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the House Education and Career Readiness Committee, thank you for allowing me to appear before you today.

My name is Daryl Kubilus, and I am in my 11<sup>th</sup> year as the Superintendent of Cloverleaf Local Schools in Southwest Medina County. We have 2,600 students in our 119 square mile district comprised of 10 different townships/villages, making us the largest geographic district in Medina County. When I came to Cloverleaf in 2008, the district was in fiscal watch. Three and a half years later, with a five-year financial forecast that showed our inability to make payroll by year end, we were entered into state fiscal emergency in January, 2012. From 2008 to 2013 we cut \$7.1 million from our \$25 million annual budget and reduced 78.5 staff positions.

In 2012 we had the dubious distinction of being the only district in the history of the state to have been in fiscal emergency and “Excellent with Distinction” simultaneously. Fast forward to September, 2018 and we received a more dubious distinction by being the only school district in the state to be in the upper 1/3 of all 608 state school districts in the student Performance Index metric while simultaneously receiving a composite grade of “D” on the State Report Card. Using my school district as an example, I would like to offer perspective on the needed changes that HB 591 can bring to our current school report card system.

In the 2017-18 report card, Cloverleaf improved in 15 of 21 grade level performance indicators. This was a result of careful data analysis and planning at every grade and content level. This improvement came a year after we improved in 15 of 23 grade level performance indicators the previous year. Despite the significant improvements we made in these performance indicators, we were unable to meet the state’s criteria for many indicators, having received an “F” in this category for both years. Of course, an “F” is viewed as failure. Continuing to be labeled a failure while making yearly improvements is discouraging to our staff, students, administration, board, and community. An “F” grade is not an accurate portrayal of our efforts or the performance of our students as evidenced in another report card metric, the Performance Index. In this measure, the best measurement of the average performance of a district’s students, we scored a “C” or, what we as superintendents are told, an “expected” grade. The elimination of A-F letter grades is foundational to HB519.

As a superintendent, I value growth measures for our students. In the transition year from PARCC to AIR assessments in 2015-16, my district struggled mightily. To give perspective, Cloverleaf scored a -14 in the progress measure that year with a score of -2 or lower considered an “F”. Of our three district schools, none of them scored below a -12 but our composite score was -14. Of course, no explanation or methodology for the score is explained in the report card.

Fast-forward two years, and we have improved significantly in the value-added growth measure. In fact, our district value-added one year composite score rose from the -14 to -.6 which is a "C"; however, since value-added is now a 3-year performance average, our composite grade is still an "F". The net result is that anyone taking even a cursory look at the report card will conclude that we are a failure when it comes to progressing our students from one year to the next. As I just articulated, the real data tells a far different story, a story beyond letter grades.

By far, the most misunderstood metric on the entire report card is the Improving At-Risk K-3 Readers (formerly K-3 Literacy) measure. The most concise definition I can give is that this measure is the percent of the previous year's K-2 students who were off-track and placed on a Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan (RIMP) and were subsequently moved to on-track the current year minus the students who were not placed on a RIMP and failed to score proficient or better on the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade English Language Arts Ohio Achievement Test!

At Cloverleaf, we scored a 44% which was a "C" on this measure. Constituents have ask me why only 44% of our third graders can read. When faced with this question, I can either try to help them understand the measure with the complicated explanation I just gave or tell them a simple truth about our 3<sup>rd</sup> graders: 99.5% of them were promoted to 4<sup>th</sup> grade as a result of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading guarantee last year and 100% of them were promoted the year before. HB519 eliminates this complicated metric in favor of 4<sup>th</sup> grade promotion rate.

The final report card measure I would like to bring to your attention regards graduation rate- another misleading metric. This year's report card (Class of 2017) showed our district with an 87.8% graduation rate ("C" grade) in our 4-year cohort and a 91% graduation rate ("B" grade) in our 5-year cohort. Constituents have questioned why we have so many drop-outs at Cloverleaf as a result of these percentages. Since it is not clear on the report card, it is easy to conclude that students who don't graduate in 4 or 5 years are drop-outs. The reality is that not all students can finish school in 4 or 5 years and students with disabilities are federally entitled to continue their education. In the Cloverleaf class of 2018, which will be reported in next year's report card, we will show a 4-year graduation cohort of 90.2%. What is not included in this number are the 2 students who graduated the summer after their 5<sup>th</sup> year, 3 students who graduated in 6 years, and 1 student who graduated in 7 years for a 96.7% graduation rate that is unbounded by time! Would I have preferred they graduate in 4 years? Sure. However, we worked with these students, nurtured them, motivated them to hang in there, and they didn't drop out! HB 591's graduation profile acknowledges this and provides clarity to the graduation rate.

Representative Brenner and members of the education committee, thank you for the opportunity to share my perspectives on the Ohio Report Card as it relates to HB519. Improving the accountability measures of the report card so that Ohio residents can understand them as well as not attaching the stigma of letter grades to school districts is important. I would be happy to respond to questions at the pleasure of the chair.