



OHIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Rebecca L. Higgins, President  
Scott W. DiMauro, Vice President  
Tim Myers, Secretary-Treasurer  
Sheryl Mathis, Executive Director

---

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

## **OHIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**

### **House Education Committee**

#### **House Bill 591**

#### **Proponent Testimony**

**December 4, 2018**

Good afternoon Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the House Education Committee. My name is Donna O'Connor. I am a teacher in Dublin City Schools and a member of the Ohio Education Association (OEA). Over the past year, as a member of the State Board of Education Report Card Workgroup, I have participated in stakeholder meetings in support of HB 591. Today I am testifying on behalf of OEA as a proponent of HB 591. OEA also supports the recommendations in the State Board of Education's recent report card reform resolution.

HB 591 (R-Duffey) is a good bill with well-considered reforms to Ohio's school report cards. This important legislation would restore trust to a report card system that currently provides confusing and misleading information to policy makers and the public.

One of the fundamental components of HB 591 is ending the use of arbitrary and deceptive letter grades on report cards. Instead, seven benchmark performance measures would be used to show how districts and schools compare to others. Districts and schools would also have an opportunity to showcase their strengths by voluntarily including other information on report cards, such as unique student support resources, enrichment programs and other offerings that broaden the experience and preparation of students.

As a package, the HB 591 reforms are designed to ensure that school report card data and metrics meet the following standards:

- *Understandable*: Use intuitive methodologies and descriptors that illustrate the metric.
- *Transparent*: Educators, parents and policy makers should be able to see the math on which report card metrics are based.
- *Parent and student-centric*: Present data so parents can see how their children are likely to do, as opposed to looking at all children generally.

- *End bias against low-income districts:* Stop the current “winners & losers” approach that is stacked against districts in extreme poverty. Instead use data to identify and mitigate the barriers to learning that are routinely faced by students in poverty.

The State Board of Education’s Report Card Workgroup spent the last year developing report card reform recommendations, many of which align with the provisions in HB 591. The State Board recently approved these recommendations in a resolution that was passed 15-0. The resolution states that Ohio's educational groups, elected officials and residents "no longer have confidence in the Report Card as currently designed, and desire a new report card methodology."

In part, the resolution recommends that letter grades be eliminated for all report card measures and replaced with dashboard data, or alternatively, that letter-grades be rescaled as appropriate to avoid correlations to poverty and racial demographics. The State Board resolution further instructs ODE to work with the Ohio General Assembly on revisions to the existing report card system.

OEA stands ready to support a legislative fix to the current state report card system. All education stakeholders need better information with which to support Ohio’s schools and students.

Thank you for your consideration. I am available for any questions you may have.