

Senate Finance Committee
Proponent Testimony on SB 246
Ann Brennan, Executive Director
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Chair Oelslager, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Minority Member Skindell and Senate Finance Committee members, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 246.

My name is Ann Brennan, and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio School Psychologists Association, which represents close to 1000 school psychologists serving in Ohio's schools. On behalf of those members I am happy to support SB 246, and I thank Senator Lehner for involving OSPA in the collaborative feedback process that has resulted in this bill. School psychologists agree with the testimony previously presented that suspensions and expulsions, in these early grades especially, should be used only for the most significant offenses. In order to succeed, students need to be in school and engaged in learning.

We strongly support the provisions in the bill related to Positive Behavior Supports and Interventions (PBIS), and recommend continued and additional funding to help school districts fully implement this multi-tiered system of behavioral supports and interventions. Ohio has a well-established network of PBIS training and resources available through ODE and the State Support Teams (SST). The research is clear that referrals for discipline decrease when PBIS practices, beginning in kindergarten, are implemented correctly and sustained. Schools that have the greatest success, have an active, committed, and well-trained school team in place to provide on-going training to school staff as well as to monitor the progress of the interventions, including collecting and evaluating reliable data.

I have included with my testimony the most recent evaluation of the Ohio PBIS Initiative; the summary on page 53 is well worth reading and demonstrates the potential fully implemented PBIS related practices can have on improving the school climate for all students.

We must do all we can to improve the behavioral health outcomes for students, they are coming to school with more fragile emotional health, and are often not receiving mental health services in the community. If we can intervene effectively early on, we may be able to prevent more serious mental health issues later and help secure a better life for Ohio's children.

Thank you for considering our views.