



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

**Ohio Education Association  
Senate Bill 246 Proponent Testimony  
Senate Finance Committee  
April 10, 2018**

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Skindell, and members of the Senate Finance Committee. My name is Scott DiMauro. I am a teacher from Worthington currently serving as the Vice President of the Ohio Education Association. On behalf of the 125,000 members of the OEA, thank you for the opportunity to present proponent testimony on Senate Bill 246 which seeks to limit certain out-of-school suspensions and expulsions for children in grades pre-kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

Senate Bill 246 aligns with OEA Legislative Policy passed at the December 2016 OEA Representative Assembly regarding out-of-school suspensions and expulsions of children ages nine and under.

As the Committee has heard from previous witnesses, there were over 36,000 out-of-school suspensions in the 2015-2016 school year, and 34,000 out-of-school suspensions in the 2017-2017 for students in grades pre-K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Almost half of these suspensions were for disruptive and disobedient behavior. A wide variety of research has concluded that more exclusionary approaches to school discipline are ineffective and fail to improve individual student behavior. It also is shown to attribute to a series of adverse consequences later in life, including academic failure, incarceration, and other social and academic issues.

The legislation acknowledges that prohibiting suspension and expulsion is not enough. OEA supports the requirement that school districts implement a positive behavior intervention and support framework (PBIS) to improve the school climate. The use of these constructive interventions are more effective alternatives to suspension and expulsion and improve the educational and social outcomes of students. Senate Bill 246 also includes a \$2 million appropriation to assist schools in implementation and a three-year implementation timeframe that will allow school staff the time needed to determine the best approach for moving forward.

In conclusion, I would like to express my appreciation to the sponsors of the legislation for holding a series of stakeholder meetings. OEA believes that SB 246 is a positive development for Ohio's youngest learners and urges support of the bill. I would be happy to entertain questions from the Committee.

