



Testimony to the Senate Education Committee on Sub HB166 –
Graduation Requirements Plan Amendment
May 22, 2019

Chairwoman Lehner, Vice Chairman Terhar, Ranking Member Fedor, members of the subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on Substitute House Bill 166. My name is Ann Sheldon, and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio Association for Gifted Children (OAGC). My comments will be limited to the graduation requirement plan that is outlined in Amendment SC2880X1. OAGC supports this amendment which is based on the plan developed by the Alliance of High Quality Education, Fordham Foundation, and Ohio Excels. The proposed plan strikes a good balance between setting solid standards for graduation and the need for flexibility to ensure that students can show competency through multiple pathways.

It is important to note that the proposed plan was not developed in a vacuum. The three organizations that are responsible for the main provisions of the graduation plan reached out to multiple stakeholders to develop consensus. OAGC was pleased to be able provide our input and ensure that our concerns were addressed in the final proposal.

The proposed plan is superior to Ohio's current graduation pathway in several respects, the most important being the ability for students to take multiple pathways to show competency without lowering standards. The plan also requires districts to adopt an early-warning system to communicate with students and parents/guardians about students who are at risk for not meeting graduation requirements. Far too often, students do not understand how far away they are from fulfilling the requirements until their senior year. This is usually too late to make up for lost ground.

OAGC is intrigued by the idea of developing a 13th year for students who need extra time to graduate. We support the study group to develop this idea further.

Finally, OAGC is particularly supportive of the language that ensures that students shall not be required to retake the end-of-course exams in high school if the student achieved at least a proficient score or a "competency score" on the exam prior to high school. Many gifted students have taken Alegbra I (and to a lesser extent English Language Arts II) before they enter high school. In the past, this has caused issues in meeting both state and federal assessment requirements.

In conclusion, the proposed graduation under Amendment SC2880X1 moves Ohio forward by offering a flexible plan for more students in Ohio to show that they are ready for college or careers while still maintaining solid standards. OAGC supports this plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this issue. If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please contact me at anngift@aol.com or 614-325-1185.

