

 **The Ohio School Counselor Association**

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Proponent Testimony on SB 121

October 1, 2019

Chair Lehner, Vice Chair Terhar and Ranking Member Fedor, thank you for the opportunity to share the Ohio School Counselor Association (OSCA)’s perspective on Senate Bill 121, bipartisan legislation that would establish a standard for health education in Ohio’s K-12 schools.

OSCA is a statewide organization that seeks to empower, unite and support school counselors in their role of advancing student success. As school counselors, our primary concern is the wellbeing and achievement of our students. To that end, we support strong, evidence-based curricula and programming that will provide students with the knowledge and life skills they need to thrive. SB 121 advances that goal. By requiring the State Board of Education to create a standardized curriculum for health education, the bill enables local school districts to impart consistent, evidence-based information on health and wellness to students across Ohio. OSCA feels that basic statewide curriculum standards are an important component of a strong education system, and supports efforts to ensure all students in our state have access to consistent information on health education.

Furthermore, OSCA believes it is critical that students receive support and education on mental health, especially through instruction in social and emotional learning (SEL). SEL’s focus is teaching skills around managing emotions and behaviors, solving problems and interpersonal conflicts, developing confidence and healthy coping strategies, building positive relationships and increasing resilience. School counselors see firsthand the way this skillset promotes positive development and forms a foundation for overall mental wellbeing and success. Our Association is supportive of the incorporation of comprehensive mental health education as a part of the state standards that would be established under SB 121.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 121. OSCA appreciates the bipartisan sponsorship behind this legislation and urges members of the Senate Education Committee to support the bill.