

Chair Lehner, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share my personal thoughts regarding Senate Bill (SB) 358. My name is Patrick Schymanski, and I am the Legislative Liaison for the Elida Local School Board. I would like to express my thanks for the help you provided to schools because of the COVID-19 pandemic. I appreciate the work that has gone into the development of SB358.

I do support this bill and especially the following items:

- Requiring the Ohio Department of Education to request a waiver for federally required state tests.
- Continuing the freeze on report cards and steps such as new state takeovers and EdChoice district designations.
- Allowing districts flexibility regarding evaluations for educators and administrators, as well as student promotions and graduation requirements. This includes both High School graduation as well as, the Third Grade Reading Guarantee.

I also appreciated the testimony of Michelle Grimm, President of the Ohio School Counselor Association. Her testimony matches conversations that I have had with our Counselors and especially with our school Social Workers. Please review and consider her thoughts. Our school Counselors do develop a significant amount of time to setting up test schedules, coordinating classroom. Libraries and computer rooms to smooth out the testing interruption that occurs. This includes our social workers. This year with more students academically behind our school counselor's time is far better spent helping students and parents maintain their grades, develop recovery strategies and help students, especially first generation college applicants through the application and scholarship process. Our social workers do a wonderful job (per our school resources officers) of helping students with emotional and family issues. Especially this school year, that time is essential to help get our discouraged students back on track.

Please consider the words that teachers have submitted in support of SB358. These letters do match the sentiment of the teachers I have talked to. Removing the testing burden from these folks will help our students and their families make the next school season more productive.

I would hope that you also address and resolve the voucher mess that was created by adding an unapproved thought into the state budget. HB 305 does offer a solution that is very reasonable but does challenge the budget process. Right now, a few school districts are on the ballot, not because they need additional funding but to meet the requirements of the voucher income transfer process. The State can solve the budgeting concerns by ensuring that sufficient revenue is raised at the state level to match the required expenditures. In my opinion, if the state is not willing to raise revenue, why is the requirement to raise revenue a local need. Remember, the local government and the local public school system did not propose the voucher program. If we are going to change the local requirement to match state funding (on some kind of sliding scale), then it would be helpful if the State legislators led the way by finding additional state funds to support all the educational needs and funding. In short, the voucher situation is complicated with many opinions and is best resolved by long and through debate. I would hope that SB358 place a hold on vouchers by keeping funding and authorizations to match the 2019

levels. Then, proper, and though debate can address and resolve this issue without any need to go to court, like some are proposing.

Finally, again, thank you for addressing a difficult subject. Our students, public, private or charter, need this help. Our teachers, regardless of school system type also need this support. SB358 will help our teachers focus on helping students learn, help those behind, catch up and address the social-emotional health of our students.

Respectfully,

Patrick Schymanski

Legislative Liaison

Elida Local School Board member