

Senate Education Committee
Senate Bill 388
Auglaize County ESC
December 8, 2020

Chair Lehner, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking member Fedor and members of the Senate Education Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today regarding Senate Bill (SB) 388. My name is Shawn Brown. I am the Superintendent at the Auglaize County Educational Service Center.

My position today is in support of SB 388.

SB 388 would permit school districts, for the 2020-2021 academic year some needed latitude in respect to employing substitute teachers. The Bill would allow each educational entity to employ an individual as a substitute teacher according to the educational entities' own requirements.

My ESC serves each of the six districts located in Auglaize County. Similar to many counties in our great state, a shortage of available and properly licensed substitute teachers has been an ongoing issue. As we wrestle with the current pandemic the shortage of available substitute teachers has only been exacerbated.

The Auglaize County School districts have made every responsible effort to remain in session and provide our students with a degree of normalcy. With the exception of Waynesfield- Goshen Local School which start the academic year four days on and one day remote, all districts have remained in session five days a week with only a few bumps in the road.

Again, in any typical year, a shortage of qualified substitute teachers is a concern.

Speaking specifically about the classrooms supported by the Auglaize County ESC, typical numbers of absences due to "traditional" illness has averaged 360 Certified employees and 729 classified staff for the months of August through November over the past three years.

This year alone, employee absences directly contributable to COVID-19, for the same four month period has exceeded 340 additional employee absences, five classroom closures and numerous lost days of face-to-face instruction.

Under current law, a substitute teacher must hold a bachelor's degree along with a substitute license issued by the State of Ohio. SB 388 would allow, for one academic year, each local board of education to determine the requirements for substitute teachers. I can speak confidently, each of the seven Auglaize County educational boards would demand substitute teachers be of good moral standing and require them to submit to a proper criminal records check.

As you consider this bill, I asked you to keep in the back of your mind the students served by the Auglaize County ESC and I am sure similarly by other ESC's throughout the state. Many of these students are our most vulnerable and most needy students. Face-to-face instruction coupled with consistency in their daily routines is instrumental in their success.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.