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State Representatives

Chairwoman Manning, Vice-Chairman Bird, and members of the Ohio House Primary & Secondary Education Committee, thank you for allowing us the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill (HB) 200. We look forward to productive conversations with the committee and all related stakeholders.

HB 200 has been in the works for a long time. The state report is at the heart of many essential education policies in Ohio. It determines the list qualifying schools for the EdChoice voucher program, school takeovers through Academic Distress Commissions (ADCs), what charter schools remain open or closed, and other public education accountability measures. Its impact goes further as it effects where families move, property values and local taxes, and fabric of our local communities.

This situation became apparent in February 2020 during the HB 9 Conference committee hearings of the 133rd General Assembly. After hearing over 50 hours of testimony and over 300 witnesses in a matter of days, whether they were for or against school vouchers or the debated legislation; we consistently heard an overwhelming majority of the witnesses agreed that the root problem in the vouchers and education is the state report card.

This heartbreaking event is one of many examples that reinforces that piecemeal changes are not enough. When looking at the education policy of Ohio the last decade and seeing how ADCs and other policies have failed our students and schools, it is clear we must make true long-lasting, systemic change to best serve our children. Fixing the state report card is how we start this process.

Our official work started with the biennial state operating budget, HB 166, during the 133rd General Assembly that established a joint Senate and House committee to examine the state report card. This committee heard testimony from several stakeholder groups including parents, teachers, administrators, and compiled a list of recommendations.

We later formed a bipartisan bill drafting group in January 2020 and worked directly with school superintendents, whose work lives or dies by metrics in the report card.

Our study group began with a set of goals in mind:

- Simplify so that it is easy to understand
- Comply with federal guidelines
- Remove punitive approach/replace with proactive approach
- Fair and equitable measurement



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- Eliminate the design to negatively compare districts
- Limit the measures graded and report only what is necessary

We used this framework as the foundation that led the bill we have today.

HB 200's first change is that it does away with A-F grading system. This system may be easy to look at, but it is not easy to understand. What is a C? There are wildly differing opinions on what a C grade means. The fact that there is even a question about someone's opinion about what a C means to them means there is room for interpretation and confusion. This scenario should not be the case. A school's rating is not a matter of opinion. It is a reflection on how that school and our students are performing.

This fact is why we move to a new descriptive rating system:

- Significantly exceeds Expectations
- Exceeds Expectations
- Meets Expectations
- Substantially Approaching Expectations
- Moderately Approaching Expectations
- In Need of Support

There is no guessing with these ratings. To simplify, schools are either underperforming their expectations, performing at expectations, or outperforming their expectations. We have levels in there to inform schools performing below expectations how much they must improve, and we have ratings above expectations to allow schools to exemplify their remarkable accomplishments.

HB 200 also ends the overall building and school grade. These overall grades are only used to negatively compare our schools. Rating only the components will do away with simple comparisons, and will require people to actually look at the school's performance in detail and get a sense of what is truly going on in the school and where continuous improvement is needed.

The bill removes any derogatory language regarding "failing" schools. Some schools may be significantly behind, but it does nothing but cause pain and anguish to simply address them as failing. On the other hand, it is perfectly acceptable to say "we need support."

Beyond overwhelming number of parents and educators calling for ending the letter grade system, in November 2018, Ohio's State Board of Education unanimously



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approved a resolution recommending eliminate all letter grades from school and district report cards.

In the same way that our children are more than a letter grade, we know our schools are also more than a collection of data points and can only better serve our children with this much-needed, calibrated evaluation system.

We'll now move along to the components. We know that you can't simply change some names and expect everything to change for the better. When looking at the components we did a deep dive into how they function, and looked at ways to improve them to give a more accurate representation of how our schools are performing.

In the bill the components are:

- Gap closing
- Achievement
- Progress
- Graduation
- Third Grade Reading Guarantee

We do away with the current “prepared for success” measure. We moved a lot of what was in that component under the graduation component as reported information. We believe that it should automatically be assumed that our schools are good enough that if an Ohio student receives a diploma, he is prepared for success.

As a tool to those looking at the report card we directed that the department must include a line graph representing the most recent three-year trend data for each performance measure. This line graph must indicate if the trend data for the measure is upward, downward, or stagnant. This would allow administrators and parents to see how their school is faring over the course of time and to see if any changes made are working or not.

We'll now give a brief example of some changes we made to each component:

- Gap closing
 - Eliminated use of sub-groups of less than 20, added a “gifted” sub group to properly identify those accelerated students



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- Achievement
 - Performance Index score is based off of 18-19 data. Max score is an average of the top 10% of scores. This number shall be updated by ODE every 5 years.
- Progress
 - Eliminate the use of sub-groups in the data. Gives the option to use an average of 3 years for the rating, or the most recent year, whichever is higher
- Graduation
 - We move some data into the graduation component. Most of this data is only reported, not rated.
- Third Grade Reading Guarantee
 - We use the promotion rate of those who move on to fourth grade rather than basing it off of the state's third grade English language arts test, and only those who completed all prior grades in the same building or district.

The other changes we make are to some academic triggers. As you will see in the analysis starting on page 7, there are several provisions in the O.R.C. that are currently tied to the letter grade of the report card. There are too many to go through individually, but the general gist is that this bill will make it so that a lot of these provisions are not based off of one letter grade, but are triggered by being below “meets expectations” in several areas, or the good provisions are triggered by being above “meets expectations” in certain areas.

Chairwoman Manning, Vice-Chairman Bird, and members of the Ohio House Primary & Secondary Education committee, we know this was a lot at once and that this is a very big bill, but it is also very important. It is important because it restores fairness to our public schools, and provides transparency as to how well they are performing. We thank you for indulging us today and look forward for your support of HB 200. We will gladly take any questions you may have. Thank you.