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OHIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Ohio House Primary and Secondary Education Committee

HB 200 – Report Cards

Interested Party Testimony – April 13, 2021

Good afternoon Chair Manning, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee. My name is Jeff Wensing and I am the Vice President of the Ohio Education Association (OEA). On behalf the approximately 120,000 member educators of the OEA, thank you for the opportunity to provide Interested Party testimony on HB 200.

OEA appreciates the work of bill sponsors Rep. Don Jones, Rep. Phil Robinson and all legislators that have provided input in preparing this important legislation. The introduction of HB 200 reflects a broad consensus among education stakeholders – on all sides of the issue – that the current state report card system is broken. The changes proposed in HB 200 also recognize that the root cause of many other education policy challenges are often directly or indirectly connected to the flaws in the current design and use of state report cards.

OEA looks forward to working with all stakeholders to establish a report card system that provides more accurate and understandable information, creates more of a focus on student opportunity indicators, and reorients the use of report card data to support and help students, educators and communities succeed rather than simply punishing those students, educators and communities.

Major priorities of the OEA include eliminating misleading letter grades and adding a Student Opportunity Profile that would help districts and schools tell more of their story and what they offer students beyond test-based measures and data.

HB 200 makes strong progress in addressing or improving some of the biggest systemic flaws with the report card system, including the elimination of misleading A-F letter grades. The bill replaces letter grades with a series of expectation/support-based measures (i.e. “significantly exceeds expectations” through “in need of support”) in five rated components under the headings Gap Closing, Achievement, Progress, Graduation, and Third Grade Reading Guarantee. Overall district/building ratings are prohibited. Taken together, these changes clarify the meaning of report card ratings, offer more positive and actionable feedback for districts/schools, and avoid oversimplification that often obscures or conceals what is really happening in a district or building. OEA is hopeful this shift away from letter

grades signifies a broader movement towards using the state report card as a mechanism to identify ways to support schools, instead of merely being used as a license to punish schools.

HB 200 would also make specific adjustments and improvements to the structure and design of the five report card components rated under the bill. The partial reconfiguration of the rated components seeks to respond to the consistent critiques and weaknesses that have become evident with the current report card. These enhancements are expected to help refocus the rated components in ways that better recognize the positive work being done in our schools, within an ongoing framework of continuous improvement designed to meet the needs of all students. Due to the inherent complexity that remains in these components, OEA recommends the General Assembly periodically review their efficacy as they are tested by time and experience.

Amendment Request – Add a “Student Opportunity Profile” to Report Card

One area of improvement to the state report card that OEA recommends is adding a “Student Opportunity Profile.” This would be a report-only profile that allows districts/schools to highlight student opportunity inputs such as staffing/student ratios, programs, services, and activities that demonstrate the variety of opportunities and supports made available to students. Such a profile would create an important aspect of the report card outside of the usual testing data and would often be more relevant to parents and students. When parents want to find out whether a school is a good match for their child, for example, they look at things like class sizes and learning opportunities that will be available for their child, not a dissection of test scores.

Inclusion of a “Student Opportunity Profile” in the state report card would also help provide policy makers with a more student-centered picture and understanding of the educational environment and supports at the district/school level. Student opportunity inputs represent many of the elements that are necessary to support educating the whole-child. They are also very often the special ingredients needed to help raise the test score outcomes that feed the rest of the report card.

Where appropriate and when data is available, OEA recommends that student opportunity data be reported by grade level and subgroup, with district and statewide averages.

A list of recommended report-only data for a “Student Opportunity Profile” is included below:

1. The ratio of teachers of record to students in each grade level;
2. The ratio of school counselors to students;
3. The ratio of school nurses to students;
4. The ratio of licensed librarians and library media specialists to students;
5. The ratio of school social workers to students;
6. The ratio of mental health professionals to students;
7. The ratio of paraprofessionals to students;

8. The rate at which teachers leave a district or building and are replaced, including for the most recent school year, the most recent three school years, and the most recent five school years;
9. The rate at which principals leave a district or school and are replaced;
10. The percentage of teachers who are properly certified or licensed;
11. The percentage of students who are enrolled in all-day kindergarten;
12. The percentage of kindergarten students who attended a preschool that is rated in either of the highest two tiers of the Step Up to Quality program;
13. The percentage of students enrolled in a performing or visual arts course;
14. The percentage of students enrolled in a physical education or wellness course;
15. The percentage of students enrolled in a world language course;
16. The percentage of students in grades seven through twelve who are enrolled in a career-technical education course;
17. The percentage of students participating in one or more co-curricular activities;
18. The percentage of students participating in advance placement courses, international baccalaureate courses, honors courses, or College Cred Plus courses;
19. The percentage of students identified as gifted in superior cognitive ability and specific academic ability fields and receiving gifted services pursuant to that Chapter;
20. The percentage of students participating in enrichment or support programs offered by the district or building outside of the normal school day;
21. The percentage of eligible students participating each school day in school breakfast programs offered by the district or building;
22. The percentage of students eligible for transportation by school bus each school day;
23. The ratio of technology devices to students; and
24. The ratio of portable technology devices students may take home to students.

In closing, thank you again for this opportunity to provide feedback and amendment recommendations on HB 200.

OEA stands ready to partner with the committee on this important legislation for the benefit of Ohio's students, educators, schools, and communities.

Thank you for listening and I am available for any questions you may have.