

**House Primary and Secondary Education Committee  
House Bill 200 Testimony  
March 20, 2021**

**Marlon Styles, Superintendent  
Middletown City School District**

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of House Bill (HB) 200. My name is Marlon Styles, proud Superintendent of Middletown City School District. As one of the Superintendent's selected to be a member of the original report card study committee and a member of the bipartisan workgroup with Representative Jones that developed HB 200, I am testifying today in support of this bill.

I recently had the honor to hear Dr. Bettina Love deliver a keynote. She said "you have to be at the table for the design for the system to think of you." In the past, not everyone has been at the table. As a result, Ohio's accountability system does not think of many school districts or their students. Simply put, because of this ineffective practice, Ohio's accountability system is failing many school districts and students. In 2020, the Alliance for Excellent Education published an article titled "When Equity is Optional" (<https://all4ed.org/when-equity-is-optional/>) that included research conducted across 10 states including Ohio. The article highlighted the disparities found in Ohio's public schools based on school ratings. The Ohio accountability system shows 30% of White students attend a Lower ranked school compared to 52% of Black students. It also showed 82% of White students attend a High ranked school compared to 4% of Black students. This is what happens when an accountability system doesn't invite you to the table for the design. Dust off the extra leaves to the table, grab the chairs from the corners of the room, send out a few email invites, and host a real discussion with diverse people about real equitable report card reform.

I would like to take a moment to thank Representative Don Jones and Representative Phil Robinson for their leadership in crafting HB 200. The bipartisan legislation is necessary to deliver a fair and transparent report card. Thank you for inviting rural, urban, suburban, high poverty, and diverse school districts to the table as a part of the design so Ohio's accountability system thinks of all districts, families, and most importantly students. The diverse work group consisted of three very different school districts representing the diversity of Ohio's schools including one district that is 80% white, another that is 100% free and reduced lunch, and a rural district that represents the BASA Report Card Committee. Thank you for inviting Superintendents to the table to design the reform areas found in HB 200. I am proud to say that we are thinking of all students.

Please consider these two school districts

	<b><u>District 1</u></b>	<b><u>District 2</u></b>
<b>College Credit Plus Course Offerings</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Early Literacy Initiatives</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Internship Programs</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Mentoring for Students</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Hope Squad Team</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Computer Science Pathway</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>English Learner Multi-Tiered Supports</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>1:1 Technology K-12</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Portrait of a Graduate</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>3 Year Positive Achievement Trends</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Overall Summative A-F Rating</b>	<b>?</b>	<b>?</b>

What is the overall rating of District 1? What is the overall rating of District 2? If I shared the demographics, would that help? If I shared the free and reduced lunch rate, would that help? If I shared suburban, rural or urban, would that help? If I shared the zip codes, would that help? My hope is that all the things the districts are doing for children is what is most important, and not a single summative grade. Opportunities are available for students, and both districts are showing continuous improvement. Parents and community members would be proud to see the district is improving, providing access to technology, supporting diverse learners, offering career pathways, supporting the social emotional needs of its scholars, investing in early learners, and college bound students. Still want to know the overall summative ratings?

Key areas in HB 200 to offer strong support include:

- No overall summative rating
- Six performance ratings
- 3 year trends for each rating
- Five performance measures (Achievement, Progress, Graduation, Gap Closing, 3GRG)
- 6 ranges of scores for achievement assessments (including Approaching Proficient)

Some are advocating that their recommendations have an Equity Lens or an Equity Component. I want to be very clear in stating my opposition for their recommendations. Breaking news renaming Gap Closing an Equity component is not equity, it is disrespectful. Earlier you heard the disparities in Ohio's data from the Alliance for Excellent Education research. Do you think the black or brown students represented in the data feel that renaming components of an accountability system will be more equitable for them? The answer is no. If Ohio truly is passionate about equity, then my recommendation is to support HB 200, reconvene a bipartisan work group of legislators and practitioners to design and develop an accountability dashboard that reports and communicates key equity areas for Ohio's public schools.

If this is not the time, then when is? If this is not the time to embrace a fair and clear accountability system, then when is? If this is not the time to remove the punitive measures in the accountability system, then when is? If this is not the time to be emotionally upset about the disparities and disproportionalities caused by the current accountability system, then when is? If this is not the time to design a system that thinks about ALL of Ohio's districts and students, then when is it? If this is not the time to reform the very accountability system that enables the voucher system to deepen the resource gaps that so many public school students face, then when is?

I ask this driving question: What is the purpose of the information in the Ohio's report card? It is not to rank high poverty school districts at the bottom? I can tell you what it is supposed to be. A communication tool transparently showcasing what a school district is doing to educate the students. A tool that allows parents to understand where the district is showing increases or decreases in student learning. A tool that includes the successes of the graduating class showcasing their life ready dispositions. A tool that provides accountability and supports continuous improvement. It is time for Ohio to sit at the table, embrace the reform components of HB 200, commit to continuing the work in the future to build a dashboard that honors equity. The work group on HB 200 went about the work the right way. Legislators came together with bipartisan support, diverse school districts were at the table, we listened first, and developed recommendations for all of Ohio's school families and school children. That sounds like a work group that deserves a good report. To anyone in the room, what letter grade should we give them? In closing, I ask that you support House Bill 200 in its entirety. Chair Manning, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of House Bill (HB) 200. I am happy to answer any questions.