



Ohio School Counselor Association
House Bill 82
Proponent Testimony
May 18, 2021

Good afternoon Chair Manning, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson and esteemed members of the House Primary & Secondary Committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Ohio School Counselor Association (OSCA) on HB 82, which would make the ACT voluntary in Ohio. My name is WillaMarie Jackson, and I am the current President-Elect of OSCA.

School counselors are often the go-to testing administrators for schools, so we are very familiar with the toll tests like the ACT have on the students we serve. In our work, we see firsthand the way frequent and excessive test-taking creates added anxiety for students already struggling with challenging home circumstances, stress and full learning workloads. School counselors exist to ensure students succeed, and forcing a student who has already committed to a career tech or vocational pathway to spend a whole day sitting for a test whose score will not be of use to them is not in line with that goal. In fact, instead of pulling those students away from work or lab time, we should be further encouraging their pursuit of pathways that are well-suited to their skillset and interests.

In addition, requiring the ACT only further perpetuates the outdated narrative that college is the best path for all students, a narrative that school counselors are consistently working to dispel with parents. As the state and Legislature continue to work to fill in-demand jobs and address workforce gaps, continuing to require the ACT for all juniors will be in conflict with those objectives.

Finally, of particular concern to school counselors is the time it takes to administer these college admission assessments. It not only cuts into learning time, which has become a far more precious resource as we emerge from the pandemic, but also staff time, including school counselors' availability to meet with and serve students. OSCA does not want our members to be pulled into testing administration over their important work in social/emotional, academic and career development. Schools should be doing more to support already overwhelmed school counselors in their critical roles, and making one more test voluntary will help work towards that goal.

Thank you for considering my testimony today. OSCA urges the committee to support HB 82 and I would welcome any questions.