



**State Representative Andrea White**

Sponsor Testimony: House Bill 333

September 28<sup>th</sup> 2021

Chairman Manning, Ranking Member Robinson, and Members of the Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 333 with my Joint Sponsor, Representative Miranda. This important legislation will empower our counselors around the State of Ohio by requiring the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) to create an official recommended job description for school counselors based on the current ODE Standards. This legislation has gathered support from the Ohio School Counselor Association, the Ohio Education Association and the Ohio Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, with no opponents currently.

Day in and day out, our school counselors are confronted by a myriad of challenges helping students and families. These challenges revolve around not only the present, but also the future as students prepare for life after high school. In 2016, the Ohio Department of Education acknowledged this when they created counselor standards focused around not only academics, but also social and emotional development and career awareness, exploration and planning. House Bill 333 will help align the expected competencies for our school counselors with the actual work they're expected to do in our schools. A recommended job description will provide guidance to school districts on what responsibilities our counselors should have to meet the state standards, while further maximizing their impact and fully utilizing their Masters-level training.

Ohio would join 11 other states with a clear job description for counselors by passing this legislation. The bill is nearly identical to House Bill 367 of the 133rd General Assembly, which passed the House by a 76-10 vote. A minor change would add a 120-day deadline from the day the law would take effect to give ODE time to create the job description. Additionally, it will ask ODE to designate at least one school counselor liaison within the department to facilitate easier communication between school counselors and ODE. According to the Ohio School Counselor Association, Ohio is the only state without a dedicated school counselor liaison in its state education department.

Chairman Manning, Ranking Member Robinson, and Members of the Secondary and Primary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony before you all today and I want to thank Representative Miranda and the Ohio School Counselor Association for their partnership on this important legislation. We are happy to answer any questions committee members may have at this time.