



The OEA will lead the way for continuous improvement of public education while advocating for members and the learners they serve.

**House Primary and Secondary Education Committee
Senate Bill 229 Proponent Testimony
November 9, 2021**

Good afternoon, Chair Manning and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee. My name is Scott DiMauro. I am in my 30th year in education, which includes 16 years in the classroom as a high school social studies teacher. I currently serve as President of the Ohio Education Association (OEA). On behalf of more than 120,000 OEA members, thank you for the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony on Senate Bill 229.

Senate Bill 229 is an important measure that would allow school districts to submit to the Department of Education, by April 30, 2022, a declaration to implement or discontinue use of a blended learning model for this current school year. As school districts continue to respond to the Covid -19 pandemic, this provision is needed because the previous temporary learning flexibilities have expired and the majority of school districts did not submit these declarations prior to the July 1, 2021 deadline. This provision will afford school districts much needed flexibility to respond to pandemic related issues such as increased quarantines or lack of staffing.

OEA also supports the provisions within Senate Bill 229 that allow individuals to provide services to students with special needs in their licensed areas by electronic or telehealth means and various report card changes.

However, OEA has concerns with a few other provisions included in the measure. OEA requests that the provision in the bill that requires districts to allow students who quarantine to temporarily enroll in the online school operated by the school district until the quarantine ends be amended to be permissive and not required. This provision has been flagged by our membership as problematic as there could be curriculum alignment and staffing issues.

Secondly, we request that districts who have already submitted extended learning plans under Governor DeWine's directive to count towards the bill's provision requiring districts to submit remediation plans on learning disruptions resulting from the coronavirus pandemic.

In summary, OEA supports Senate Bill 229 with the changes outlined above. Please contact me if you have any questions.

