



**House Primary and Secondary Education Committee  
Senate Bill 229 Written Testimony  
Buckeye Association of School Administrators  
Ohio Association of School Business Officials  
Ohio School Boards Association  
Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators  
Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators  
November 9, 2021**

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written proponent testimony regarding Senate Bill (SB) 229. This testimony is submitted on behalf of Kevin Miller, Buckeye Association of School Administrators, Katie Johnson, Ohio Association of School Business Officials, Will Schwartz, Ohio School Boards Association, and Barbara Shaner, Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators and Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators. Our organizations represent public school district superintendents, treasurers/CFOs, business managers and other school business officials, boards of education, and elementary and high school principals from around the state.

On behalf of our members, we begin by thanking Senator Blessing for sponsoring SB 229 and the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee for supporting the bill. We appreciate the bill's responsiveness to the needs of school districts and students as the current global pandemic persists.

We continue our thanks to Chair Manning and others on this committee for the work that has continued in making the bill better as it came to the House for consideration. We also appreciate the timeliness by which the committee is poised to advance the bill so that it will have the most positive impact possible for schools.

SB 229 is aimed at providing flexibility at the local level for the current school year regarding schools' ability to transition to alternative learning methods when necessary. Specifically, the bill extends the date to April 30, 2022 by which districts may submit Blended Learning declarations to the state. There is also a provision in the bill that allows districts at parents' request to

transition students to remote learning just as they did in the previous school year. These temporary changes will help districts manage disruptions they may still be experiencing in today's uncertain environment.

SB 229 also includes language that will allow districts' new online schools that were established through the most recent biennial budget bill to be exempt from the state's requirement to develop an emergency management plan. Because the online schools do not have a physical building the requirement was unnecessary and the exemption language in the bill will serve to clarify the situation for those schools.

It is our understanding the committee is prepared to accept a substitute version of SB 229 during today's hearing with the following changes to the bill:

- Local flexibility for determining whether a third-grade student should be retained under the Third Grade Reading Guarantee (teachers, principals and parents to decide), just as they have for the two previous school years.
- Quarterly rather than monthly reporting to the state regarding Blended Learning activities.
- The ability for school districts to use previously submitted remediation plans to satisfy the bill's new remediation plan requirement for students that have fallen behind during the pandemic. Virtually all school districts have recently submitted either an extended learning plan or a plan to deal with learning loss under the American Rescue Plan Act, thus rendering the original bill's requirement unnecessary.
- Makes permissive (rather than mandatory) the ability for school districts to allow quarantined students to temporarily participate in these new online schools.
- Adds an additional superintendent (for a total of two) and a principal to the upcoming report card review committee (established through HB 82 for the 2023-2024 school year), the three representing a rural, an urban and a suburban school district.
- Removes a provision that would put restrictions on school districts' purchase of real property.

Based on our understanding of the changes to SB 229 through a substitute version of the bill, we offer our full support and urge the committee to adopt its provisions.

In closing, we again express our appreciation for the opportunity to work with this committee on improvements to SB 229. Please feel free to contact us with questions.