

Gary Z. Lindgren, Board Chair
Cincinnati Business Committee

Theodore Adams
Grant Street Partners, LLC

Beverly Beery
Beery Insurance Services, LLC

Alex R. Fischer
Columbus Partnership

Mary Beth Martin
The Farmer Family Foundation

Margie Wright McGowan
Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland

Oscar Marquez
JPMorgan Chase

Randell McShepard
RPM International Inc.

Roland Medrano
La Mega Media

Daniels S. Peters
Lovett & Ruth Peters Foundation

Patrick J. Tiberi
Ohio Business Roundtable

Lisa A. Gray
President, Ohio Excels

Senate Primary & Secondary Education Committee

Testimony on Sub. House Bill 82

Lisa A. Gray, President, Ohio Excels
June 23, 2021

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the report card provisions found within substitute House Bill 82 (HB 82). My name is Lisa Gray, and I am the President of Ohio Excels.

Ohio Excels – a non-partisan, non-profit organization created by leaders of Ohio's business community – is committed to helping improve educational outcomes for Ohio's students and ensuring that all K-12 schools prepare students for success in the next step of their lives, whether it is higher education, the military, or the workforce.

School and district report cards are a critical part of improving student outcomes in Ohio. Report cards give parents, families, and members of the community – the primary audience of the report cards – an annual snapshot of how well students are learning. Report cards also help identify our highest-performing schools so we can learn from them and flag which schools need additional support.

Working with our coalition of stakeholders, we sought to develop a new report card that:

1. Prioritizes equity and ensures that every student counts;
2. Ensures each component is more accurate, predictable, and fair; and
3. Simplifies and streamlines the report card to improve transparency and offer clear, honest information for parents and the public.

Ohio Excels believes that the report card proposal in HB 82 achieves all these goals. It combines the best provisions of Senate Bill 145 and House Bill 200 into a comprehensive proposal that will satisfy the needs of parents, community members, employers, educators, advocates, and policymakers. I would like to use this opportunity to highlight some of the key elements of HB 82's report card system.

- **Ratings:** While we favored A-F letter grades, we support the compromise reached to implement a 1–5-star rating system with text descriptors to provide additional context. We believe the proposal maintains transparency for parents and the public, and by sticking with five rating levels, the bill is able to make simple updates to more than a dozen state policies that rely on report card results.
- **Overall Rating:** We strongly support how this proposal continues the overall rating. It is popular with parents and helps maintain the system’s transparency. By including an overall rating, policymakers are able to define the weights for the report card’s components based on their priorities instead of letting the media decide.
- **Early Literacy:** We are happy to see the bill includes a rated component of early literacy – the most important foundational skill. The component counts all kids and appropriately prioritizes reading proficiency while giving credit for promotion and improving struggling readers.
- **College, Career, Workforce & Military Readiness:** While we would like this component to be rated right away, we support the approach found in HB 82. This improved component eliminates the previous tiered structure and expands the ways students can demonstrate they are ready for success after high school.
- **Other Component Improvements:** HB 82 makes positive changes to all of the other components by:
 - Removing the unfair indicators met measure from the Achievement component;
 - Focusing on overall student growth in the Progress component and removing the subgroup demotion;
 - Keeping a five-year graduation rate to give schools credit for continuing to help students;
 - Reporting information on the students who did not graduate on time to highlight how schools are still serving students, especially students with disabilities; and
 - Prioritizing achievement *and* growth for all student groups through the Gap Closing component.
- **Implementation:** While we would like the new report card to be fully implemented for the 2021-22 school year, we can support the one-year pause in ratings and the three-year delay for the College, Career, Workforce & Military Readiness component. It’s critical that we get the implementation right, so it makes sense to ensure the report card is ready before beginning the ratings.

Ohio Excels would like to thank Chair Brenner, Rep. Jones, and Rep. Robinson for their hard work on this issue over the past two years and for guiding us all to the strong proposal found in HB 82. We would also like to thank Marcus Benjamin, Aaron Riggins, AJ Thomas, and all the staff for helping to make this a reality.

In conclusion, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of HB 82’s new report card system, one that we believe will be more accurate, fair, transparent, and prioritize the success of all students for years to come. If you have any questions, I can be reached at LisaGray@OhioExcels.org.