

May 8, 2023

My name is Andrea Bauer. I am a retired Beavercreek City School Teacher, a teacher of the year awardee dedicated, compassionate, and committed to providing students with lessons that challenged them to think and engage in active learning. I am here today to oppose this change to the State Board of Education.

During my career I have served on state committees. When No Child Left Behind was enacted and testing implemented, I joined educators from all types of districts in developing state curriculum that local districts then implemented. Subject focused committees determined appropriate benchmarks for grades levels and listed basic requirements for achieving these benchmarks. I am not an advocate of state testing, but I do believe this endeavor gave all the students in the state of Ohio the chance for an equal quality education.

Education is constantly evolving. Every school year is different because the students' needs, abilities, ways of learning, and readiness to learn vary. Every student is unique and their family dynamics are unique. Students need a state board of education that understands their uniqueness and gives educators the latitude to develop each student's potential.

The Pandemic was a rare and unprecedented occurrence. At the time decisions were made in the best interest of children's health. Now, as a nation we see a decline in student achievement. Given the situation the decline should have been anticipated. Instead of changing the state board of education, provide school districts with the extra resources needed to ensure more individualized instruction and summer school programs. The achievement gap can be closed.

Ohio Legislators emphasize parent's rights. Parents are provided with curriculum, book lists, newsletters, encouragement to engage, and the ability to opt out. Parents have the right to make educational decisions for their child but not for all children. That is and has always been true. A change in the state board is not needed to insure parent's rights.

This bill will make education a political football, changing with administrations. The State Board has 8 appointed members (42%) to represent the political vision. The other 11 (58%) are elected. The people of this state want a voice in their schools, parent's rights. They want their voice to be involved in curriculum decisions. Taking oversight of curriculum from the elected state board of education is unnecessary and nefarious.

Yes, the State Board of Education at times proceeds slower than legislators wish. Like legislation, educational decisions are a process which take time to bring to fruition. In recent years some board members have agendas that create division, are not in the best interest of educating our children, and extend the process.

I urge you not to create DEW and take curriculum oversight away from our elected state board of education. Parents want a say in curriculum and their state board elected member is their voice.

