



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

## OHIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

### OHIO HOUSE PRIMARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

#### SB 168 (As Passed by the Senate) – Opposition Testimony

April 23, 2024

Chair Bird, Vice-Chair Fowler-Arther, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the Committee:

We are Jeff Wensing and Matt Dotson. Jeff is a career math teacher in Parma City Schools and the current Ohio Education Association (OEA) Vice President. Matt Dotson has been an OEA Government Relations lobbyist for the past 21 years. On behalf of OEA's approximately 120,000 members, thank you for the opportunity to provide opposition testimony on Senate Bill (SB) 168.

SB 168 proposes wide-ranging regulatory statutory changes that intend to provide “regulatory flexibility” to schools and districts across the state. These changes would impact standards for hiring educators, teacher evaluations, professional development, dyslexia intervention training, nonteaching staff reductions, as well as eliminate numerous statutes the legislations deems “obsolete.”

OEA is concerned that some proposals in SB 168 would undermine the ability for Ohio's students to have access to high-quality student services. As a result, OEA is opposed to the bill.

To the extent some of the bill's proposals seek to address educator shortages, OEA has comprehensive recommendations to address the root causes of education staff shortages. These proposals are included in the OEA's Educator Voice Academy recommendations on Teacher and Education Support Professional Recruitment & Retention. As a whole, the OEA proposals seek to strengthen and support the education profession without lowering hiring and licensure standards. [PM202209-06 OEA-Educator-Voice-Academy-Cadre 1.pdf \(ohea.org\)](#)

#### OEA Opposes the following SB 168 provisions:

**Allows employment of non-licensed individuals as classroom teachers:** OEA opposes cutting corners on teacher preparation. Ohio's students and taxpayers deserve trained and licensed educators in every classroom. Holding a master's degree and passing a subject matter exam is not a substitute for the preparation required to obtain a professional educator license. Allowing unlicensed teachers lowers quality without alleviating recruitment and retention challenges



because unlicensed individuals are the least prepared and the least retained. OEA encourages aspiring educators to use Ohio's expedited alternative licensure pathway, which allows individuals with at least a bachelor's degree who have passed a subject matter exam to become licensed in fewer than six months by completing a state-approved Intensive Pedagogical Training Institute (ITPI), either on-line or in-person, with enrollment fees less than \$1,000. See: [Alternative Resident Educator Licenses | State Board of Education \(ohio.gov\)](#)

**Allows courses to be taught outside the normal school day for no additional pay:** OEA opposes eliminating a requirement in current law that districts enter into supplemental compensation contracts with teachers assigned to teach high school classes outside the normal school day. Allowing teachers to be assigned more work for less pay is unfair and makes it more difficult to recruit and retain teachers. This issue should be left to local collective bargaining.

**Prohibits preference for experience/seniority when making non-teacher staff reductions:** OEA opposes eliminating current law that requires school districts to give preference on the basis of seniority/experience when reducing nonteaching staff. OEA also opposes new language proposed in SB 168 that would prohibit consideration of seniority/experience as a factor when making reduction. This prohibition needlessly limits the flexibility of administrators, many of whom likely consider seniority/experience to be a relevant factor in developing and retaining a quality workforce. This issue should be left to local collective bargaining.

**OEA is an Interested Party on the following SB 168 provisions:**

**Teacher evaluation – alternative framework:** OEA is an Interested Party regarding the proposal to allow districts to opt-out of the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES). The determination to use an alternative evaluation framework should be determined locally in collaboration with teachers and adopted through the local collective bargaining process.

**Dyslexia professional development:** OEA is an Interested Party regarding clarifications that districts have the flexibility to determine the number of professional development hours a teacher must complete on dyslexia instruction. Under Ohio law unchanged by the bill, dyslexia professional development must be between six and eighteen clock hours.

**Removal of obsolete provisions:** OEA recommends seeking specific rationales from those who recommend the elimination of the following Ohio Revised Code sections, beyond the general statement that these provisions are "obsolete":

- A requirement that the Department publish a report regarding victims of student violence. 3301.0714(B)(1)(o)
- A requirement that the Department encourage, seek out, and publicize innovative and exemplary school-parent and school-business partnerships. 3301.131
- An exemplary parental involvement grant program, administered by the Department. 3301.134

- An annual reporting requirement from leaders of each seminary, academy, parochial, or private school. 3301.14
- The Governor's Effective and Efficient Schools Recognition Program, which recognized the top 10% of schools based on factors such as student and fiscal performance. 3302.22
- Requirement to provide copies of reports to school districts and the public profiling each school building in the district and a public notice requirement related to these reports. 3301.0714(H)
- Requirement that the Department establish a committee to develop report card models for charter schools. 3314.012
- Standards that trigger the closing of poorly performing community schools. 3314.35
- A grant program for teachers who hold certificates or licenses issued by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards. 3319.55
- A requirement that the Department study and share with school districts promising practices in Ohio and throughout the country for teachers with certain professional licensure. 3319.56

This concludes our testimony. Thank you for your support of Ohio's educators and students. We are available to answer any questions the committee may have.