

4th House District

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**Committees**

Commerce & Labor
Higher Education
Pensions (Ranking Member)
Primary & Secondary Education
Technology & Innovation

**Representative Beryl Brown Piccolantonio
4th House District**

Testimony to the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee
House Bill 581
December 3, 2024

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Fowler Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson, and fellow members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for inviting Representative Isaacsohn and me to provide sponsor testimony for House Bill 581, the Charter School Oversight Act.

HB 581 would improve oversight regarding Ohio's Community schools (most often called Charter Schools), which comprise a notable portion of Ohio's students and state education spending. The reality for now is that public taxpayer dollars are being spent on other systems of education that are not held to the same accountability measures and are not required to serve every student in the way our public schools are. At the least, families deserve to have a way to compare their public schools to community or charter schools and private schools.

Over 100,000 of Ohio's students attend one of over 300 Charter Schools; this bill would provide these students and their families additional information and assurance that they will be receiving a quality education.

This legislation would require the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) to develop a system to compare the performance data of charter school students with similar performance data of school district students in the community in which the school is located. Although both traditional public schools and community schools have state report cards, there is not a simple one-to-one comparison when you look at the two report cards. This change would make it easier for families and students to have a meaningful comparison when possible. DEW would be responsible for making this information publicly available.

House Bill 581 would also require that community schools or STEM schools notify the parent or guardian of any student enrolling in that school from a traditional school district of the results of the most recent state report card issued for that school. Some charter schools will heavily publicize if a traditional public school in their area is low rated but will avoid talking about their own rating if it is low despite recruiting as if they are high rated. It is important that parents and guardians know the rating of a charter school when electing to send their child there.

Ohio's charter schools are not a monolith, and some do provide a strong education. However, substandard charter schools are a detriment to the students that are underserved by them and the system as a whole. This bill would prohibit DEW or an educational service center assuming sponsorship of a school that have either had a

sponsor choose not to renew their contract or were declared to be un-auditable by the Auditor of State. This loophole has saved and kept open failing or problematic charter schools and bailed out their sponsors.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important piece of legislation. We would be happy to answer any questions from the committee.