

**Senate Education Committee**  
**February 27, 2023**  
**Testimony of Habeebah Rasheed Grimes, CEO, Positive Education Program**

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram, and Members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 1.

My name is Habeebah Rasheed Grimes. I am the CEO of Positive Education Program. By training, I am a school psychologist, and I am also a mother to two children who are currently students in the Cleveland Municipal School District

PEP provides services – both direct and consultative in nature – for children challenged by complex developmental trauma, mental health issues and autism, their families and the professionals who support them. Our programs include six PEP Day Treatment Centers that function as schools providing special education services and as mental health facilities (Eastwood, Greenview, Hopewell, Phoenix, Prentiss Autism Center, Willow Creek), PEP Connections, PEP Early Childhood Plus and PEP Assist.

Daily at PEP, we ask: What does it mean to prepare young people for lives where they will thrive in schools, homes and communities? How do we equip them to lead successful lives?

Economic well-being is essential, but it is a part of life, not the whole of it. To succeed in the workplace requires both hard skills and soft skills. Too often, it is the absence of those soft skills, which in education are what we refer to as social and emotional development, that impedes a person's ability to succeed in the workplace and in life.

As educators who work through a trauma-informed lens, we know that we must build educational days designed to engage the whole child. Education is both science and heart, and it is a human-centered, relationship-driven enterprise.

It is our job as educators, as people invested in developing children to live full and rewarding lives, that we open their eyes to possibilities and create learning spaces where they can imagine and learn to create the kind of world they hope to see. Today's economy may require one set of skills, but tomorrow's world may require something altogether different. At the heart of it, we want to teach young people to learn how to learn and to love to learn.

Isn't the stewardship of these goals best suited to those who spend their lives understanding education, people invested in developing the whole child? Why would we risk allowing education to become a political playing field open to the whims of what each Governor believes his/her mandate to be? Shouldn't education be a place sheltered from these politics?

An engaged and well-educated citizenry is essential to a functioning democracy. We need to increase voice and representation, helping our citizens feel closer to where decisions are made so that they understand where they hold agency. SB1 creates more distance between citizens and their systems, and it is not what our students need from us today. Please vote for the development of the whole child and vote no on SB1.