

William Green, M.Ed.
Part-Time Faculty
Youngstown State University
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Dear Honorable Members of the Senate,

As a former K-12 educator, district administrator and current part-time faculty member at Youngstown State University, I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 219, which aims to reinstate the P-5 and 4-9 licensure grade bands in Ohio. As an educator and proud Ohioan invested in the future of our state's educational system, I believe that restoring these licensure grade bands is essential for the quality and effectiveness of teacher preparation programs across the Buckeye state.

Reinstating the P-5 and 4-9 licensure grade bands acknowledges the importance of focused content preparation for teachers. In a P-8 program where candidates are expected to prepare for four subjects rather than two, it is evident that each subject receives less attention and depth of study. Teacher candidates in P-5 and 4-9 programs receive approximately 1/3 less content preparation compared to those in current Middle grades programs. This dilution of content knowledge undermines the quality of education our teachers can provide to students.

The current structure of separate methods courses tailored to P-5 and 4-9 licensure levels ensures that educators receive specialized training for the unique developmental and instructional needs of these age groups. Broadening methods courses to encompass a wider grade range for P-8 licensure would inevitably compromise the depth and specificity of this training. By reinstating P-5 and 4-9 licensure grade bands, we ensure that teacher candidates receive the targeted preparation necessary to excel in their respective teaching roles.

It is crucial to consider the feedback and perspectives of teacher candidates themselves. A statewide survey revealed that approximately 25% of current teacher candidates would have either left the state of Ohio to pursue their desired licensure or abandoned their pursuit of a career in education altogether if the P-8 licensure had been implemented prior to their enrollment. This statistic underscores the dissatisfaction and apprehension among prospective educators regarding the proposed changes to licensure requirements.

The shift to a P-8 licensure model may inadvertently exacerbate attrition rates within the teaching profession. Many individuals who would have thrived in P-5 or 4-9 programs may struggle to meet the higher-level demands of a P-8 program, leading to increased dropout rates among teacher candidates. Similarly, some candidates who would initially opt for a 6-12 program over a P-8 program may find themselves ill-equipped to handle the rigors of higher-level coursework, resulting in further attrition from the teaching workforce.

In conclusion, reinstating the P-5 and 4-9 licensure grade bands is imperative for preserving the integrity, effectiveness, and sustainability of teacher preparation programs in Ohio. By maintaining specialized content preparation and methods training tailored to specific grade bands, we ensure that our educators are adequately equipped to meet the diverse needs of students across different developmental stages. I urge you to support Senate Bill 219 and uphold the standards of excellence in education that our state values and deserves.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William Green', with a stylized flourish at the end.