

To: Andrew Brenner, Senate Education Committee Chair; Vice Chair O'Brien; Ranking Member Ingram; and other members of the Senate Education Committee  
From: James E. Schultz, Ph.D., Robert L. Morton Emeritus Professor of Mathematics Education, Ohio University  
Re: HB219  
Date: May 18, 2024

I am writing in support of HB219 to reinstate the P-5 and 4-9 grade bands for Ohio teaching certification.

I hope you will consider my experience pertaining to this issue. For 11 years I served as the Robert L. Morton Professor of Mathematics Education at Ohio University, during which time I taught mathematics and education courses for prospective teachers in the Department of Mathematics and in the College of Education. Before that I was an Associate Professor of Mathematics at The Ohio State University, where I authored a text for prospective elementary school teachers and coauthored the 1989 National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics.

It is important to have distinctive certification requirements for early grades vs. middle school. The NCTM recognized this in the writing of the landmark Standards, creating separate writing groups for grades K-4 and 5-8. As a member of the Grades 5-8 writing group, I can assure you that is not only the math content of considerably different levels, but so are the approaches to teaching it, especially regarding the technology that is used to support learning.

What is sure to result from the one-size-fit-all certification is that many prospective teachers who would feel comfortable teaching the lower grades will find themselves called upon to teach in the higher grades, where they will be inadequately prepared. The challenge of having enough qualified teachers to fill the positions will not be met by widening the grade bands. I'm told that a state survey has shown that these broad standards would deter almost one in four teacher candidates from entering the program. Others would likely fill positions in the upper grades without the preparation they need to serve their students.

I am concerned for my two young granddaughters who soon enter Ohio public schools and for the millions of other children who will be affected by this. What is needed to ensure quality public education in Ohio is not lowering standards, but rather supporting universities to prepare better teachers and rewarding teachers who meet the required standards.