

April 7, 2025

The Honorable Sarah Fowler Arthur
Chair, Ohio House Education Committee
77 S High Street, Floor 12
Columbus, OH 43215

Written Testimony to the Ohio House Education Committee

Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on House Bill 62. We commend you for your commitment to affordability and providing a successful pathway for high school students to earn college credits. We are aware that making college more affordable is a priority for Ohio policymakers. For over a decade, the Association of American Publishers (AAP) has been supporting these efforts through course material affordable access programs that save students money and produce positive learning outcomes for students.

AAP opposes House Bill 62 in its current form. The bill, as currently written, encourages the use of open source materials “in lieu of purchase-only textbooks,” which significantly limits choice, and the benefits of a free market, by prioritizing the use of one type of course material over another. AAP raised the same point last session when the provision referencing the use of open source materials was removed in its entirety from SB 104 after a thoughtful and thorough stakeholder review process.

Additionally, as the bill is currently written, undue burden would be placed on high schools and colleges, as they would have to closely coordinate to determine who oversees the availability, use and review of OER materials, which could be time-consuming and costly.

Association of American Publishers

AAP represents the leading book, journal and education publishers in the United States on matters of law and policy, advocating for outcomes that incentivize the publication of creative expression, professional content, and learning solutions. Publishers have played a vital role in fostering the education ecosystem and public interest in the United States for more than two centuries.

The American educational publishing industry is known and respected throughout the world for its comprehensive library of pedagogically sound content, carefully authored by experts in their field and interactive learning tools, proven to enhance teaching and learning. Many of these resources essential for meeting the learning needs of today’s students, preparing to solve increasingly complex challenges involving math, science, medicine, law and so much more.

Today’s Course Materials

AAP and its education member companies have long understood that students often struggle to pay for college. College affordability is a priority for AAP member companies, who are focused on lowering the total cost of education and the cost of course materials.

Publishers have developed a new generation of digital course materials and are aligned with new course material delivery models that increase access and affordability, improve outcomes, and better meet the faculty and student needs of today. These new, interactive digital course materials help faculty meet students where they are, facilitating a personalized learning experience for students that ultimately improves student success.

As a result of this commitment from publishers, student spending on course materials has [dropped significantly](#) over the last few years, with independent research firms **Student Monitor** and **Student Watch** both reporting an average 45% decline in student spending on course materials over the past decade. Similarly, the College Board's most recent report, [Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid 2024](#), clearly illustrates that the average amount students actually spend on course materials is just \$340 per year, making the category a rare bright spot in terms of affordability.

Innovative Delivery Models to Improve Student Access and Affordability and OhioLINK

In 2015, the U.S. Department of Education issued federal regulations (34 CFR 668.164(c)(2)(i)) authorizing institutions of higher learning to charge students for books and supplies as part of tuition and fees. Programs developed in accordance with the federal regulation are commonly called "Inclusive Access." Through these "Inclusive Access" programs, publishers provide access to instructor required digital materials, on, or before, the first day of class to all students enrolled in a course. Students can then pay for course materials alongside tuition and fees.

The federal rule establishes an important mechanism for institutions of higher learning to include course material expenses as part of tuition and fees, *if* the institution has an arrangement with a publisher that enables it to make those books or supplies available to students below competitive market rates and in a timely fashion.

These rules paved the way for OhioLINK to partner with educational publishers, as part of [Affordable Learning Ohio](#), to offer Inclusive Access to all of its institutions, saving Ohio students approximately \$35 million in 2022.

Affordability programs like Inclusive Access:

- Save students up to 70% on course materials — ensures prices are below market rate as consistent with federal law.
- Ensure all students access to their instructor-required course materials on the first day of class while also giving students the option to drop the course and not pay for the materials or opt-out during the institution's established add/drop period.
- Allow students to use financial aid monies to pay for course materials and not incur an out-of-pocket expense.

Ensure Value for Faculty and Students

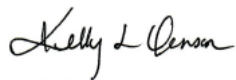
Education publishers ensure the content and courseware they develop meets the current affordability and access needs of students. These course materials must also carry a significant benefit for faculty and the higher education ecosystem.

Education publishers add value in the following ways:

- Develop courseware with interactive assignment types and assessments that help faculty personalize the student learning experience.
- Publish scalable, pedagogically sound content with relevant application for today's students, accompanied by instructor support materials such as lecture notes, presentation slides, secure testbanks and more.
- Build content and courseware to the most current accessibility standards.
- Assure student data privacy standards are upheld and personal information is secure and not sold to 3rd parties.

Thank you for your time and attention. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly L. Denson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kelly L. Denson
Senior Vice President, Education Policy & Programs
Association of American Publishers