

House Committees

Public Insurance and Pensions, Ranking  
Member

Education Committee

Energy Committee

Local Government Committee

Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review



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**Representative Sean Patrick Brennan  
14<sup>th</sup> House District**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today in support of H.B. 205. This bill takes an important step toward strengthening Ohio's teaching workforce and supporting those who are preparing to enter one of the most critical professions in our state.

This legislation is grounded in a simple, but powerful, idea: investing in student teachers is investing in the future of education in Ohio, thus it is named The Future Educator Support Act.

It is well known that we are facing a teacher shortage in our state and nation. There has been a decrease in students enrolling in education programs and there is a struggle to retain teachers due to a number of factors.

As you all know and as I can attest from my student teaching days in the early 1990s, student teachers work fulltime without compensation, while still paying full tuition and managing the costs of living. This serves as a barrier to entry to many aspiring educators—particularly those from low-income backgrounds or underrepresented communities.

Under this bill, public school districts will be permitted—not required—to pay student teachers an hourly wage that is no less than the state minimum wage, and to offer them healthcare benefits similar to those already provided to full-time teachers in the district. This recognizes the reality that student teaching is not only a rigorous, full-time responsibility—it is essential on-the-job training that forms the backbone of future educator preparation.

To further support teacher candidates, the bill authorizes the Department of Education and Workforce to provide either a cost-of-living stipend, test fee

waivers or reimbursements—or both—for individuals enrolled in teacher preparation programs. And it gives our state institutions of higher education the option to waive all or part of an individual's tuition during their student teaching period.

These permissive measures offer flexibility to local districts and institutions, while sending a clear message that we value the time, effort, and talent of future educators.

This legislation also takes a data-driven approach to understanding our teaching workforce needs. It will require the Department of Education and Workforce to develop and administer an annual online staffing survey. The resulting report will be published and shared with the General Assembly and the Department of Higher Education—providing timely, actionable insight into teacher shortages and helping inform policy responses. In addition, the bill will formally recognize teaching as an “in-demand” job in Ohio, aligning it with the broader workforce priorities of the state. This, along with the other provisions of the bill, furthers the **workforce development** goal of this General Assembly.

We know that teachers shape not only student outcomes, but also the long-term health of our communities and economy. If we want to attract the most capable and committed individuals into the teaching profession, we must remove the unnecessary financial barriers standing in their way.

Student teachers who are paid will be better equipped to focus on professional development and best practices than worrying and struggling to make ends meet. This will result in better instruction, learning outcomes, classroom management, and a stronger commitment to their craft. In short, when we invest in our educators, students benefit. Further, it will allow for a rich and diverse group of candidates by allowing individuals from all socioeconomic backgrounds to pursue teaching, rather than limiting the profession to those who can afford unpaid labor.

By offering modest, but meaningful, financial support, this legislation will help student teachers stay the course, complete their preparation, and enter classrooms with the experience and confidence they need to succeed.

It is an honor to join with my fellow colleague and educator Representative Don Jones on this important legislation.

I respectfully urge your support. Let's take this opportunity to build a stronger, more sustainable educator pipeline—and to affirm our commitment to the people we entrust with our children's futures.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.

