



Advocating for Life, Faith, and Freedom in the Public Square

To: Members of the Ohio House Education Committee
From: Chris Long, President Ohio Christian Alliance
Re: Proponent Testimony S.B. 19 Academic Intervention Services

I would like to thank Chairman Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Brennan, and members of the House Education Committee for hearing our testimony today in support of S.B. 19. Education decline in Ohio and across the country is the crisis of our times. President Trump is right to reset the table and the narrative of how we go about public education and its funding, including expansion of school choice and focusing on children who are behind in reading, math, and science due to the COVID shutdown. The scores are so bad in reading, math, and science in Ohio alone that a major tutoring and remedial studies program is needed in all of Ohio's 88 county school districts to help the students who have fallen behind. That's why S.B. 19 that provides evidence based academic intervention services free of cost to students who demonstrate a limited level of skill in state assessments in math and English language arts and can benefit from these focused tutoring services.

The National Report Card which came out on January 29, 2025 stirred discussion on the national level and here in the State of Ohio about just how bad the national education crisis is at this time. Only 30 percent of fourth graders are reading proficient nationally. Here in Ohio the number is 32 percent. Only 29 percent of eight grade students are reading proficient nationally. In Ohio, only 32 percent of both fourth and eighth graders are reading proficiently. These figures are from the National Report Card of the 2024 school year. The next National Report Card is due out in January 2027. The Ohio Report Card showed little improvement in English language arts over the last year. The math scores did not fare much better.

The education crisis is a flashing red warning light telling us that an urgent remedy is needed to help Ohio school children who have fallen behind in reading comprehension due to the COVID shutdown. Assessments conducted earlier this year indicate that some students are two and three years behind in their grade reading levels. We cannot fail this generation. We must provide them with the tools they need to get caught up on their education progress or be in danger of pushing these students through a failing educational system, the effects of which will linger with them for years to come.

Gov. DeWine launched the science of reading program in 2023, with a focus on phonics. The program has had some success, as reading scores have increased slightly, but a bold major effort is needed to gain real ground. Time is not on our side as we have just crossed the 100th day of the school year. Every day that passes, these children fall further behind. That is why we urge you to pass S.B. 19, Academic Intervention Services.

Thank you, members of the House Education Committee, for receiving our testimony in support of S.B. 19.