



House Education Committee
Senate Bill 19 Interested Party Testimony
Buckeye Association of School Administrators
Alliance for High Quality Education
Ohio School Boards Association
Ohio Association of School Business Officials

May 12, 2026

Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Brennan, and members of the House Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill (SB) 19. My name is Paul Imhoff with the Buckeye Association of School Administrators, which represents Ohio's public school superintendents. Joining me in support of this testimony is Tony Podojil with the Alliance for High Quality Education, Malania Birney with the Ohio School Boards Association, and Katie Johnson with the Ohio Association of School Business Officials. On behalf of our members, we appreciate the opportunity to share our perspective on SB 19.

As you know, SB 19 is a comprehensive, far-reaching proposal which has undergone a series of substantive changes in this committee over the past several months. Throughout that time, our associations and members have closely reviewed the bill's various versions and convened a group of school superintendents, building administrators, curriculum directors, and educators to provide constructive feedback and ensure the spirit and intent of the legislation remain intact. Overall, we believe the bill is moving in the right direction, but several provisions raise operational, implementation, and instructional concerns for our members.

Diagnostic Assessments

We support the bill's provisions updating the approved lists of K-3 math and reading diagnostic assessments. Several assessments currently utilized in hundreds of school districts were recently removed from the state-approved list due to statutory limits enacted in House Bill 96. As a result, districts now must purchase new assessments for the upcoming school year.

SB 19 appropriately expands the approved list of assessments to six, rather than the current five. Despite that change, there will still be districts in the middle of existing contracts with

assessment providers whose tools will still be invalidated by the state despite having been previously approved. These districts will be forced to pay for additional assessment systems to serve the same purpose, while also incurring the additional costs and staff time associated with retraining educators on entirely new platforms. This creates unnecessary costs for taxpayers and implementation burdens for schools.

We would propose allowing districts to continue using previously state-approved assessments through the duration of their existing contracts before transitioning to newly approved providers.

Advanced Learning Opportunities in Math

We appreciate the recent changes to the bill's advanced learning opportunities in math. Moving the identification year from 7th grade to 6th grade is more consistent with how districts currently establish advanced math pathways and puts in place a compacted 7th- and 8th-grade math course in the 7th grade followed by Algebra I in the 8th grade. The bill also preserves the requirement to begin providing advanced opportunities beginning in the 3rd grade.

Regarding the bill's new approach to determining which students qualify for advanced math courses, our preferred method would be to couple the state test score with an additional measure designated by DEW – a diagnostic assessment, for example – rather than relying on teacher and principal discretion, which could be subjective and inconsistently applied across districts.

Computer-Adaptive Tests

We support the bill's provision requiring the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) to develop a detailed plan for a next-generation computer-adaptive state assessment system. We are excited for the prospect of modernizing the state's assessment experience by reducing testing time, providing faster, better, and more actionable results, and allowing state testing to occur later in the school year to allow more learning to take place.

Statewide EMIS System

We have serious concerns with the provision that requires all districts to utilize a single, statewide EMIS software system designated by DEW beginning August 1, 2027.

Current student information system platforms vary from district to district and are deeply integrated into district operations and support everything from EMIS reporting to parent communications, scheduling, transportation, attendance reporting, grading, and more. Not only would this be a monumental shift for school staff in every district, who would need to be retrained, parents would also be forced to grapple with yet another new tool with no discernible benefit or reason for the change.

We urge you to remove this provision from the bill.

Prohibition on Administering Multiple Assessments to a Student

We also have concerns with the provision prohibiting districts from administering more than one diagnostic assessment from a different provider to the same student.

Districts frequently utilize different assessments for different instructional purposes. For example, one assessment may serve as a Tier 1 assessment tool for benchmarking grade-level performance and supporting gifted identification requirements, while another provides the detailed skill-level diagnostic information necessary to design targeted interventions and develop state-required Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans (RIMPs). These assessments are not redundant tools and serve fundamentally different roles to provide targeted support to students.

We urge you to remove this provision from the bill.

Math Achievement Improvement Plans

We also recommend revising the Math Achievement Improvement Plan (MAIP) provision to focus on building-level eligibility rather than district-wide eligibility.

Under the current version, a district could avoid triggering a MAIP requirement even if individual school buildings within the district meet the proficiency threshold. On the other hand, a district-wide designation will unnecessarily apply requirements to buildings already performing well. A building-level approach would better target interventions and resources toward those most in need of support.

Other Considerations

We are concerned about the bill's provision requiring DEW to seek a federal waiver to replace Ohio's standards-based assessments with nationally norm-referenced tests (NRTs). Unlike Ohio's current tests, which measure whether students have mastered Ohio's academic standards, NRTs primarily compare students to their peers nationally. Moving to an NRT model could weaken alignment to Ohio's standards, make it harder to determine whether students are meeting grade-level expectations, and put Ohio on a course toward less accountability, not more.

As the committee considers its work on SB 19, we would encourage continued consideration of the implementation challenges and costs associated with the bill's various provisions, which will require significant staff time, training, adjustments, and resources at the local level.

As we stated at the outset of our testimony, we support the goals behind many of these initiatives and are committed to improving student achievement and providing advanced learning opportunities to our highest-performing students. We appreciate the committee's

continued work and commitment to this important policy area and look forward to working together on these outstanding issues.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.