



OHIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

*The OEA will lead the way for continuous improvement of public education while advocating for members and the learners they serve.*

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**Ohio Education Association  
Senate Bill 19: Interested Party Testimony  
Ohio Senate Education Committee  
Tuesday, March 25, 2025**

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee. My name is Jeff Wensing. I am a high school math teacher from Parma City Schools and currently serve as Vice President of the Ohio Education Association's (OEA). On behalf of the nearly 120,000 members of the OEA, thank you for the opportunity to provide interested party testimony on Senate Bill (SB)19.

SB 19 requires school districts to provide academic intervention services to students who score limited on state assessments in math, English language arts, or both. These intervention services must be offered free of cost to the student and must not supplant the student's core academic instructional time. The bill establishes that intervention services can be offered directly through the school, through a vendor, or a combination of both. The services can range from tutoring, additional instructional time, an extended school calendar, or other programs.

SB 19 seeks to address a real problem. Too many students are struggling in key academic areas. Every effort should be made to get students up to speed and on a pathway to academic success.

OEA appreciates that the bill allows districts flexibility in the manner to provide interventions. A "one-size-fits-all" approach is unlikely to be successful. As written, the bill allows districts to utilize programs that are already in place and avail themselves of other resources they have in their area. Further, OEA appreciates that SB 19 recognizes that a single test on a single day is not the only way to measure a student's skills and knowledge. The bill exempts students who receive a grade of "C" and have scored at least grade level on the last two diagnostic assessments in the subject.

There are, however, a few areas of concern surrounding this legislation. One is around resources. There are sure to be costs to districts associated with these interventions providing services. The fiscal note for SB 19 states that the costs of implementation, "...could be significant but are highly uncertain." Costs will vary by district based on the number of students, the types of interventions utilized, and other factors. Aside from financial resources, implementing SB 19 will take time and personnel. Resources that are often in short supply in our schools.

I would like to share an excerpt from a message we recently received from an OEA member highlighting concerns about resources and staff time:



*Things have been a struggle for a couple of years now with all teachers are mandated to do in my district. Everything has fallen on our plates, and we are all completely drowning. We are the ones administering all the progress, monitoring probes, and entering all that information into the computer. We are also the ones who administer all the benchmark testing 3 times a year. Some of our teachers are progress monitoring nearly 20 students a week. As far as resources, we were given a binder to share that weighed about 100 pounds with...worksheets and other things printed off websites that were of no help at all. We were left to figure it all out on our own time and...[cover costs ourselves]. It's causing a lot of despair and anxiety among my colleagues, and a few have already decided to leave the profession at the end of the school year.*

I say all this not as an excuse, our members are dedicated to serving the needs of Ohio's students and we agree that there must be primary focus on results and giving students the foundational skills they need. However, we also need to be mindful of the environment. Our students and our educators need support. As you weigh policy decisions, I challenge you to focus on providing adequate and responsive support. As you add things to the plates of our educators, I ask that you also work to take other things off. Otherwise, we are continuing to ask educators and districts to do more while straining already taxed resources, potentially exacerbating staff recruitment and retention issues faced across the state.

I will also caution against a myopic focus on test scores. A student's performance is often impacted by factors outside of the classroom. The approach to raising student achievement must also take into consideration issues of absenteeism, the impacts of poverty, and the needs of the whole child. Additionally, OEA recommends that SB 19 be amended to provide an exemption for students with the most severe cognitive disabilities. For a limited number of students who meet the qualifications for alternate assessment, requiring ongoing intervention based on scores on state assessments is not educationally appropriate.

Finally, OEA will note that since Ohio now has universal eligibility for voucher programs, there is an unlevel playing field that needs to be addressed. None of the provisions of this bill would apply to students who attend private schools utilizing a taxpayer funded voucher. OEA believes these students should take the same achievement tests as students in public school. If this bill proceeds, voucher students and their schools should be held to the requirements established by SB 19.

Chair Brenner, this concludes my testimony. I stand ready to answer questions from members of the committee.