

Good afternoon. I am writing regarding House Bill 96. I have two main areas for your consideration.

1. I understand there is a provision that would require districts with a certain percentage of fiscal carryover to return that carryover to taxpayers. While I appreciate the goal of putting tax payer money back in their pockets, this practice will create confusion and instability. Taxpayers have already approved giving districts the funds being collected. They are more like to do so when they are confident in a district's fiscal responsibility and quality programming. However, a fiscally responsible district will plan for the future and likely would have carryover funds to ensure financial stability in the case of unseen emergencies or future growth and needs. This new provision essentially punishes school districts for being responsible. It also means districts would not be able to plan long term to establish sound, stable educational programs and would have to go back to voters more frequently for funding. That will create voter fatigue and confusion among those not familiar with the intricacies of school funding. Please remove this provision from the substitute amendment.

2. Please rework Sec. 3313.6032 of the bill. This section requires districts to place students who score advanced on state math tests into any existing advanced math programs. The intention is wonderful, but the execution is flawed. This is problematic for three reasons. First, the state tests are assessments of minimum proficiency on grade level standards. They are not indicators of readiness for above level content. Second, at some levels, such as 7th to 8th grade, getting advanced on the 7th grade OST might mean being placed in Algebra in 8th grade. This would entail a full year skip of math instruction, which is highly challenging since Math 8, the grade to be skipped, includes a lot of pre-algebra and linear algebra skills not covered in 7th grade math or Algebra 1. We would be setting students up for failure. Second, some districts offer advanced math programs specially designed for gifted learners. However, the state tests are not allowable (rightfully so) for gifted identification. So, this law seems to imply we would need to inappropriately place students who have advanced on OST into programs designed for mathematically gifted learners, even though they are not gifted. I recommend the law be reworked to simply require districts to have objective, assessment-based criteria to automatically place students into any advanced math course pathways they may have. Allow districts to set the criteria and choose the assessments based on their individual district needs and programming.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Colleen Boyle
Columbus, Ohio