



June 24, 2025

Senate Education Committee

Interested Party Testimony on SB 156

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Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide Interested Party testimony about SB 156. The Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT) represents teachers in traditional and charter schools, support staff, higher education faculty and staff, library employees, and social workers.

We appreciate and agree with the intent to help students understand the importance of graduating high school, finding stable employment, and making responsible decisions about when to start a family. We also appreciate the statistics that show the impact these three factors have on future economic security. However, we feel strongly that questions of curriculum should be left to school districts to decide based on what their community needs and wants.

Governor DeWine's administration and the majority in this legislature have pledged to eliminate unneeded regulations. In that context, it is confounding that we keep seeing bill after bill introduced that micromanages every aspect of public schools, even in areas that have generally been left to local school districts.

One size fits all solutions don't work when you're talking about more than 600 school districts, with graduating classes ranging in size from a couple dozen students to a few thousand students. Each district should be able to set a curriculum that is tailored toward helping their students succeed and that takes into account the staffing and workload of educators.

In looking at this bill, we are concerned that with the lack of clarity about whether the "success sequence" is a concept that the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (ODEW) will incorporate into a model curriculum or if "Success Sequence" is an already established curriculum that ODEW and districts can modify. "Success Sequence" seems to be a branded name for a specific type of curriculum. Is there flexibility within the bill to allow for those core concepts to be incorporated into already existing character education programs and/or Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs within our districts. Since the five core competencies of SEL are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decisionmaking, we believe that these programs probably already cover most of what this bill is trying to achieve.

In addition, while the statistics show the correlation between the three factors mentioned, we have not been able to find any longitudinal studies that validate that teaching the success sequence has actually had an impact on students. In reviewing testimony given before this

committee, no one mentioned a district where they have used the success sequence and seen a change in what happened with students after they graduated.

We are very concerned that this oversimplifies what it takes to actually put students on successful tracks to economic success. Given that even the charts within the report [*The Power of the Success Sequence for Disadvantaged Youth*](#) show that the two greatest factors impacting future prosperity are graduating from high school and getting a full-time job, we would contend that bolstering our education system with more career exploration and more opportunities for workplace learning would be more important and more impactful than adding curriculum that has not been proven to be effective, especially when there is [evidence to show](#) that students who take CTE courses in high school are also more likely to enroll in two-year colleges and to be employed after high school.

Rather than pass bills like this, Ohio families expect the legislature to fully and fairly fund the public schools that educate nearly 90% of Ohio students. They want schools to have the capability to offer electives like art, music, and foreign language that keep students engaged and interested in attending schools. They want robust career education options and quality, affordable higher education options, so that every student can find the career path that works for them.

We feel this bill is unnecessary and could be another unfunded burden for schools to manage. However, if you move this bill forward, we do have one suggestion for improving it. We request that language be included in the bill to educate students about the value of labor unions and the impact of collective bargaining rights on the economic prosperity of both workers and the state. According to Ohio Policy Matters' [State of Working Ohio 2024](#) report, the median wage of workers covered by collective bargaining agreements (CBA) in 2023 was \$26.80 per hour as opposed to \$23.06 per hour for workers not covered by a CBA. This is about a 16% difference. The impact is even greater than that though because companies that do not have CBAs have to compete for workers by also increasing salaries and benefits. For example, when UAW won historic contracts with US automakers, Toyota responded with 9% raises and Honda with 11% raises.

In addition, multiple studies ([EPI](#) and [Illinois](#)) show that collective bargaining states outperform other states in twenty different areas including higher wages for employees, decreased income inequality, reduced wage gaps, increased government participation, decreased government spending, strengthened health and safety, increased civic participation, and better benefits for workers including healthcare, retirement plans, and paid sick leave. Any curriculum that discusses how to set children on a path out of poverty without including education about the benefits of labor unions, including how to organize a union if you do not already have one, would be incomplete and a disservice to the students.

This concludes my testimony. I welcome any questions you may have.

