

On behalf of Mount St. Joseph University, I am writing to share our perspective on the current discussion regarding teacher licensure grade bands in Ohio. As an institution deeply committed to preparing future educators, we recognize the very real challenges that districts face in securing appropriately licensed teachers. We also appreciate the flexibility currently in place that allows educators to teach up to two grade levels outside the band designated on their license.

However, we have significant concerns about the unintended consequences of changing the licensure grade bands from the current structure of PreK–5, 4–9, and 7–12, to the proposed bands of PreK–8 and 6–12. Such a change would have a substantially negative impact on classrooms, educator preparation, and—most importantly—the quality of learning for Ohio’s PK–12 students. It would also risk undermining Governor DeWine’s ReadOhio Initiative by minimizing the focus on building a strong knowledge base that is essential to effective teaching.

We are greatly encouraged by Senate Bill 144 to amend sections 3319.079 and 3319.22 of the Revised Code regarding educator license grade bands to revert to bands of PreK–5, 4–9, and 7–12, and we strongly support this direction. These bands better reflect the critical developmental stages of students, protect the integrity of teacher preparation, and preserve the program space needed to focus on implementing the Science of Reading in alignment with Governor DeWine’s ReadOhio Initiative.

In addition, adopting these grade bands would prevent the need for Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) to extend their programs beyond four years. Extending preparation programs could discourage enrollment and further hinder the teacher pipeline at a time when Ohio most needs to strengthen it.

For these reasons, we respectfully express our full support for the adoption of PreK–5, 4–9, and 7–12 licensure grade bands. This approach will ensure Ohio continues to prepare highly qualified teachers, advance critical state literacy initiatives, and ultimately improve outcomes for students across the state.

Thank you for your leadership and for your commitment to Ohio’s educators and children.

Sincerely,
Laura Saylor, PhD
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