

Proponent Testimony
SB 144 – Educator License Grade Bands
October 14, 2025

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and other members of the Senate Education Committee:

I am writing to provide testimony in support of the proposed amendment to Senate Bill 144, which is scheduled for consideration during the Senate Education Committee meeting on Tuesday. As a professor at Youngstown State University, where I teach in the Elementary Education (ELIS) program and oversee numerous teacher candidates throughout their preparation and licensure process, I am deeply invested in ensuring that any changes to teacher licensure in Ohio continue to support high-quality preparation and student learning outcomes.

The proposed amendment would:

- Allow current PK–5 dual intervention specialist pathways to continue for both general and special education;
- Establish a 4–8 generalist license that would allow teachers to fill any opening regardless of content area;
- Maintain the current 7–12 grade band; and
- Continue two-year flexibility, excluding first-year teachers.

If successful, this bill would eliminate the impending P–8 comprehensive license, replacing it with separate P–5 dual (ELIS) and 4–8 comprehensive licenses. While this proposal does not fully restore the quality and content focus of the current P–5 and 4–9 (two-content) licensure bands, it represents a significant improvement over the proposed P–8 comprehensive license.

As someone who works directly with teacher candidates, I have seen firsthand the importance of maintaining rigorous and developmentally appropriate preparation standards. The P–8 comprehensive license would have created broad coverage with insufficient depth, leaving candidates underprepared for the specialized pedagogical and content demands of both early childhood and middle-level education. The P–5 dual and 4–8 comprehensive options, though not ideal, preserve a stronger alignment between developmental stages and instructional expertise.

I urge the committee to move forward with these changes and to continue engaging with higher education institutions to ensure that licensure structures reflect both the realities of the classroom, and the professional standards required to prepare effective educators. Thoughtful reform is critical to addressing teacher shortages without compromising the quality of education that Ohio’s children deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for your ongoing commitment to supporting strong, well-prepared teachers across our state. Please accept this letter as my written testimony for the record prior to the committee meeting on Tuesday.

Sincerely,
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