

To: Sponsor & Ranking Member, Senator Catherine Ingram, Chair Senator, Andrew Brenner, Vice Chair, Senator Louis Blessing, III and all esteemed Senate Education Committee members.

From: Dr. Trisha Prunty Ed.D., BGSU Associate Professor IEC Dual Licensure program Pk-grade 5 Elementary Education and Pk-Grade 5 Special Education

Date: 10/18/2025

Memo: In regards SB 144: Educator Licensure Bands

Subject: Exacerbating the need for special education teachers in Ohio.

Under HB 33, current Ohio law requires the State Board to issue educator licenses specifying whether the educator is licensed to teach **pre-K through grade 8** or **grades 6 through 12**, replacing the former three-tier bands of **PreK–5, 4–9, and 7–12**. Ohio Higher Education teacher educational programs will start educating students in these two grade bands with incoming freshmen in the fall of 2027. The first graduates of these programs will enter the teaching workforce in the fall of 2031.

Given these significant changes, it is important to consider the ramifications of HB 33.

Specifically, beginning with the incoming cohorts of fall 2027, future educators will no longer be able to earn dual licensure in both PreK–Grade 5 Special Education and PreK–Grade 5 Elementary Education. This shift is expected to significantly **reduce the pool of new special education teachers**, as dual licensure programs will no longer be available in higher education teacher preparation programs. Dual-licensed teachers have been instrumental in supporting the unique needs of elementary classrooms. These dually licensed teachers provide flexibility in staffing, specialized expertise in inclusive practices, and a comprehensive understanding of both general and special education.

Licensure changes are likely to deter future educators from entering teacher preparation programs, further exacerbating the teacher shortage, with a particularly severe impact on special education.

Thank you,

Dr. Trisha Prunty Ed.D.
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WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: 10/18/25

Name: Dr. Trisha Prunty Ed.D.

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable): Bowling Green State University Firelands

Position/Title: Associate Professor Early Inclusive Education

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Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): SB 144

Specific Issue: Licensure band changes will exacerbate special education teacher workforce

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

Will your testimony be written, spoken, or both? Written

Please provide a brief statement on your position: By eliminating dual licensure pathways for PreK–Grade 5 Special Education and Elementary Education, the new SB 33 licensure requirements are likely to exacerbate the shortage of special education teachers in Ohio.

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.