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Ohio Education Association

House Education Committee

HB 343 – Opponent Testimony

November 17, 2014

Good afternoon Chair Stebelton, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the committee. My name is Matthew Dotson, with the Ohio Education Association (OEA) Government Services Division. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on HB 343.

While there are a number of good provisions in this bill, the OEA strongly opposes the recent amendment to HB 343 that would eliminate Ohio law establishing minimum teacher salaries and the single salary schedule framework for teachers and school employees. Ohio needs to focus on ways to pay our committed educators more, not make it easier to pay them less.

Single Salary Schedule

The OEA opposes the elimination of statutory language establishing a single salary schedule framework for teachers and public school employees. The single salary schedule requires equal levels of base pay for employees with the same levels of experience and training.

Before touching on some of the beneficial aspects of the single salary schedule framework for teachers/school employees and the operation of public schools, it is important to note that Ohio’s collective bargaining law already provides local school districts and teachers/school employees the flexibility and freedom to modify salary schedules or experiment with different compensation frameworks if they so choose. However, where no agreement exists or where an agreement makes no specification about a matter, the school district and teachers/school employees are subject to all applicable state laws pertaining to the wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment. Examples of such laws are the single salary schedule framework and minimum teacher salary schedule.

In this way, the single salary schedule provides an important baseline and structural framework for the operation of school districts, as well as basic protections for teachers and school employees. In sum, the elimination of the single salary schedule framework from law will not provide school districts and teachers/school employees any more or less flexibility than they already have under Ohio’s collective bargaining law. Unfortunately, it will have the negative effect of leaving school districts and teachers/school employees without basic guidance and statutory protections regarding a fair compensation framework.



The single salary schedule compensation framework is designed to support critical elements of high-performing schools. By helping to ensure competitive and fair compensation, single salary schedules support the recruitment and retention of high quality teachers needed to raise student achievement. Further, they foster cohesion and effective teaching teams by seeking to prevent unfair and arbitrary pay differentials based on biases regarding grade level taught, subject of instruction, job duties, race and/or gender. The single salary schedule also provides an important level of transparency for pay differentials and a basis for individual teachers/school employees to make career decisions.

Minimum Teacher Salary Schedule

The OEA also opposes the elimination of the state minimum salary schedule, which establishes minimum salaries for teachers based on years of service and training. Minimum teacher salaries serve our schools and students well by establishing basic protections for the people who serve them every day. In particular, minimum teacher salaries based on years of experience and training are part of an effort to ensure competitive and fair compensation in all parts of the state, so that teachers can be recruited and retained everywhere they are needed.

Unfortunately, state minimum teacher salaries were last updated in 2001. For example, the minimum base salary for a teacher with zero years of service and a Bachelor's degree is \$20,000. The minimum top salary, at eleven years of service with a Bachelor's degree is \$28,360; this is bumped to \$32,460 if the teacher has earned a Master's Degree.

It may be said that these low-end salary minimums are outdated and therefore the minimum teacher salary schedule is an anachronism. A quick review of the teacher salary picture in Ohio demonstrates that the teacher minimum salary schedule is still relevant, probably more than ever.

For example, the minimum base salary established in 2001 for a teacher with zero years of service and a Bachelor's degree is \$20,000, which had an inflation adjusted value of \$25,928 in 2012 (based on U.S. Dept. of Labor inflation calculator). In 2012, six Ohio school districts had starting base salaries below \$25,928. In effect, the starting teacher salaries in these districts in 2012 were less than the \$20,000 value of the state minimum salary established in 2001. Other districts were not far above. The lowest starting teacher salary in Ohio in 2012 was \$23,660. Of course, one alternative approach to dealing with the minimum teacher salary schedule would be to update the minimum salaries to reflect the inflation indexed value in today's dollars. Ensuring that Ohio's starting teachers are paid at least the value of what \$20,000 was in 2001 should be something we can all agree on. Another approach would be to explore the question of whether minimum teacher salaries should be increased beyond an inflation update.

In conclusion, the Ohio Education Association recommends that Ohio focus on ways to pay our committed educators more, not make it easier to pay them less. The salary schedule amendment to HB 343 moves in the wrong direction on this front.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am available for any questions you may have.