

MG STRATEGIES

THE MICHAEL COLLINS GROUP

Michael Collins, President
House Government Oversight Committee – HB 298 Testimony
September 27, 2021

Former School Board Member, Westerville City Schools (Two Terms)
Former State Board of Education Member (Two Terms)
Owner of Education Consulting Firm
Executive Director of four Ohio education non-profit organizations

Chair Wilkin, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on House Bill 298.

As a former two-term State Board of Education member, crossing over two gubernatorial administrations, I offer these thoughts based on firsthand experience and most importantly the ultimate benefit of 1.65 million children in Ohio. To this end, I whole-heartedly support House Bill 298 and the direct election of all State Board of Education Members in the state of Ohio. I offer this recommendation for the following reasons:

1. Elected state board members have a direct relationship to and are much more responsive to the thoughts and concerns of the constituents in their districts.
2. Previous to 1998, when there was an all-elected Board, the average length of the state's superintendent's tenure there was 200%+ more than it has been since there has been both an elected and an appointed process.
3. The overall national rankings of Ohio's schools under an all-elected board was consistently in the top 10 of all states and over the past decade plus, Ohio has drifted downward where it now finds itself in the 27-29 ranking range.
4. The educational community of Ohio, at the school board school administration school classroom levels are all yearning for a state board of education that is responsible for the growth and success of school children in direct correlation with the wishes of educators in their communities and professions.

5. The educational experience and direct connection to public school districts throughout Ohio is much more closely aligned with the elected members of the board than appointed ones.
6. The appointed members of the state board of education, since 1998 have primarily seen themselves as accountable to the governors that appointed them and not to the students, parents, communities, and professionals that are directly impacted by their actions.
7. All elected state board of education members run as non-partisan candidates and all appointed members are selected on a partisan basis.
8. Overt partisanship is a significant hindrance, not an asset to the learning processes and career successes of the students of Ohio.
9. The attendance and participation in public school activities across the state is significantly higher on the part of elected state school board members, than on the part of appointed school board members.
10. An all-elected state board of education will be much more accountable, transparent, and responsive to the students, parents, and educators of the state.

It is for these reasons and numerous others, that I would be pleased to continue to discuss this much needed transformation in the near future, as any and all of the committees see fit.

Thank you for the opportunity to share these perspectives and please know they come to you with sincere thoughtfulness and first-hand experience. I wholeheartedly urge you to act in the affirmative on House Bill 298

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Collins

President, MCG Strategies
250 E. Wilson Bridge Rd, Ste. 150
Worthington, OH 43085
614.352.2889 (w)
614.296.5118 (c)
mike@mcgstrategies.com
www.mcgstrategies.com

