



Alliance for High Quality Education
SB 145 Proponent Testimony
Senate Primary & Secondary Education Committee
March 31, 2021

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor, and Members of the Senate Primary & Secondary Education Committee, we meet again to discuss the importance and timeliness of report card reform. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to testify today in support of SB 145.

My name is Anthony Podojil, Ph.D., and I am the Alliance's Executive Director. Prior to joining the Alliance as its executive director, I served as superintendent for the West Geauga Local Schools for thirteen years. I began my educational career as an early primary teacher and served as both a Middle School and High School Principal while working in five districts ranging from rural, suburban and urban. I earned my doctorate at Cleveland State University in the area of Urban Educational Administration. With me today to assist with answering questions is Jessica Voltolini.

The Alliance has been working for several years with many stakeholders, legislators and policymakers on advancing comprehensive report card reform recommendations. This collaborative work started well over two years ago and has culminated in many of the Alliance's proposed recommendations being introduced as part of SB 145. Sincere gratitude to Senator Brenner for his SB 145 sponsorship. We are also pleased to see that Representatives Jones and Robinson introduced bi-partisan report card legislation, HB 200, this month. The Alliance feels strongly that the time is NOW to pass comprehensive changes to the state's accountability system for schools.

As I was preparing today's testimony, my starting point was the testimony I gave before the Am. Sub. HB 166 Report Card Study Committee in November 2019. As I said, many of the Alliance's report card recommendations from November 2019 have been included in the As Introduced version of SB 145. Jessica and I worked closely with the Alliance's Executive, Legislative, and Accountability Committees on the November 2019 recommendations. Jessica and I have also been actively consulting and collaborating over the past two years with multiple stakeholders, including but not limited to, the Department of Education, BASA, OSBA, OASBO, Ohio 8, Columbus City School District, Ohio Excels, The Thomas B. Fordham Institute, and the Ohio Association for Gifted Children.

The Alliance is committed to working with the legislature to pass report card reform for implementation beginning with the report card that will be issued in September 2022 for the 2021-

2022 school year. In order to meet this goal, collaboration remains critical and we are hopeful that all interested parties will come to the table to work hand-in-hand with the legislature and executive branch. Today, I will highlight all of the provisions of SB 145 we support and will focus my testimony on what the Alliance believes are the most impactful changes proposed to improve each of the six report card components.

AHQE supports SB 145 for the following reasons:

1. All the proposed changes in SB 145 meet federal accountability requirements while making significant changes to better reflect what is most important from a state policy perspective.
2. The bill focuses on the key measures of student achievement and growth.
3. The bill ensures accountability for all student groups.
4. The proposed reforms will give every school opportunities to demonstrate growth and improvement.
5. The bill streamlines the number of graded report card measures from fourteen to six by eliminating “subcomponent” ratings.
6. The changes to each component will ensure the system is measuring what is intended.
7. The bill will provide clarity and better context by reporting trend data.
8. The bill will make sure that grading scales are set at the appropriate levels with necessary review of the appropriate levels.
9. If passed in upcoming months, the legislation provides a transition timeline to the improved system for the September 2022 report card release.

Specific to the proposed changes in SB 145 to the six components, AHQE supports:

Achievement Component

- Using Performance Index (PI) as the only graded measure of achievement.
- Eliminating Indicators Met.
- Moving Chronic Absenteeism and Gifted Indicator to improved Gap Closing measure focused on equity.

Progress Component

- Reporting both 1-year and 3-year value-added data.
- Rating a weighted 3-year average growth score.
- Eliminating subgroup demotions.
- Eliminating reporting on the lowest 20% student group.

Graduation Component

- Reporting both four-year and five-year graduation cohort rates.
- Rating based on composite 4- and 5-year graduation rate.
- Reporting the number of students with disabilities who did not graduate as part of their respective four-year cohort but are still receiving educational services per an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Gap Closing Component

- Shifting focus and replacing with an “Equity Component” focused on measuring subgroup performance as it relates to meeting achievement, growth and graduation rate targets.
- Including Chronic Absenteeism and Gifted Indicator in this measure.
- Reporting raw test scores by subgroup and include comparisons to similar districts and state averages.
- Eliminating letter grade demotion as it relates to federal assessment participation requirements.

K-3 Literacy Component

- Creating a two-part measure using third grade reading proficiency rates and improvement based on reading diagnostic assessments.
- Eliminating RIMP deductions.
- Maintaining a report card measurement for only those school buildings serving students grades K-2.

Prepared for Success Component

- Eliminating current two-tiered Prepared Success component structure.
- Adding career-focused options and military readiness as an option.
- Giving schools “extra credit” for annual improvements in readiness rates.

As you can see from our testimony today, we are focused on the legislative changes that need to be made to each of the six report card components in order to make a reformed report card system successful long term. But what about the overall rating system? Recognizing the challenges in reaching a consensus with all stakeholders around the overall rating structure, we are trying our best to be thoughtful regarding how to best move away from the A-F rating system. While Alliance member districts would prefer a more data-driven approach in terms of using a dashboard, we are open to other alternatives that replace the A-F system (like a star rating system). Ultimately, the overall rating structure that passes as part of report card reform legislation should be clear and appropriately reflect school and district performance.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. Jessica and I are looking forward to working with the Committee as SB 145 moves through the legislative process and we are happy to discuss and answer any questions you have at this time.