



**Ohio Association
of Secondary School Administrators**



**Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee
Senate Bill 145 Testimony
Buckeye Association of School Administrators
Ohio School Boards Association
Ohio Association of School Business Officials
Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators
Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators
May 6, 2021**

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide interested party testimony on Senate Bill (SB 145), which would make revisions to Ohio's School Report Card. I am Kevin Miller, Director of Governmental Relations for the Buckeye Association of School Administrators. Joining me today are Nicole Piscitani with the Ohio School Boards Association, Katie Johnson with the Ohio Association of School Business Officials, and Barbara Shaner representing the Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators and the Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators.

Collectively, our organizations represent public school superintendents, board members, treasurers/CFOs and other school business officials, and building principals from around the state.

We express thanks to Senator Brenner for developing legislation that seeks to provide a more fair and understandable report card. Following are elements of the legislation that would lead to positive changes.

- SB 145 charges the State Board of Education with establishing the performance criteria necessary to implement the proposed new state report card. But in doing so, the State Board must consult with stakeholder groups and advocates that represent parents, community members, students, business leaders and educators from different school typology regions. This ensures that a variety of perspectives are considered when establishing performance levels.
- Each rated component Includes an arrow graph that shows data trends for the component, providing a visual representation of a school's or district's performance for each component over an extended period of time.

- The legislation replaces the “accelerated” performance level on student assessments with “accomplished” to avoid confusion with gifted terminology and the use of the word “accelerated” to mean subject or grade-level acceleration.
- The Progress component is determined by the overall value-added score for the district or school. It provides flexibility for ODE to explore the feasibility of using the value-added gain score and effect size to improve differentiation and interpretation of the measure. In short, it would be a true measure of student academic growth instead of a “statistical confidence” of a student’s growth, as is true with the current system. If the department determines that it is feasible to use the gain score and effect size, the state board may update the rules.
- The high school graduation rate includes both the four- and five-year adjusted cohort graduation rates, which is the current measure of this component. But the component also includes important report-only information which helps the district share the story of students who are still receiving general education services and students on an IEP who are still receiving services.
- In the Early Literacy measurement, SB 145 requires that, to the extent possible, ODE will include the results of the summer administration of the third grade reading assessment in measuring this component. This recognizes and rewards the work districts and schools are doing to provide summer intervention programs that lead to success on the Third Grade English/Language Arts assessment.

However, there are areas of SB 145 that are cause for concern for our members.

The continued use of a letter grade system means that we are satisfied with using a rating system established almost a century ago. The letter grade system was developed to assess the performance of an individual, not to rate an organization such as a school district, which has the challenge of addressing many variables on any given day. We understand that an amendment may be proposed to change to a five-level star system. Any five-level rating system is too easily translated to a letter grade system and does not solve the problem of using a rating system that clearly and fairly represent the performance of a school or district. A star system further complicates matters by creating a two-step process: first, see the star rating your school or district has earned, then, reference a written system that explains the meaning of each star level.

A summative rating of a school or district would continue to be used in SB 145. A summative or overall rating takes the focus off of the performance rating for each of the components. When this happens, it dilutes the significance of the component ratings. The component ratings more transparently show those areas where a district is succeeding and those areas where more attention, support, and growth are needed. Our organizations support no use of a summative rating in order to keep the focus on the more important component ratings.

SB 145 changes the name of the “Gap Closing” component to “Equity.” This would indicate that this component is rating equity in a school or district, and it is not. Equity is about addressing opportunities and supports for students, such as access to intervention programming, high level curriculum, technology, college and career counseling, career preparation programs, and many other things. The “Equity” component requires a student subgroup to meet targets in both achievement and progress, which is an unequitable approach. It does not recognize that many districts will struggle with achievement because of variables such as high poverty rates, but those same districts will show great academic growth with students. That progress should be recognized and celebrated on the report card. SB 145 would codify the “n” size for defining student subgroups at 15, which means students in that subgroup become easily identified within the school and the community. We suggest using 20 as the “n” size to protect student privacy.

“Prepared for Success” is a measured component in SB 145. The information provided in Prepared for Success is valuable to the community. The addition of elements in Prepared for Success is a positive. Those additional elements acknowledge that there are various paths to success that do not always include college preparedness. However, we suggest that this be a “report only” component. No matter how many elements you add, any measurement of this component is subjective. Each school district has a different reality. For example, offering Advanced Placement courses might be important to a small rural district, but their capacity, both in human resources and student capital to offer a myriad of AP courses or even an International Baccalaureate program is much more limited than a large suburban or urban district. Should they be penalized with a rating system that does not acknowledge their reality? The information in Prepared for Success is important. Report it. Do not tie a rating to it.

In SB 145, the Early Literacy component is based on the percentage of students who score proficient or higher on the reading segment of the third grade English language arts assessment. We support the use of the promotion rate as opposed to the proficiency rate, as it reflects not only performance on a single assessment, as the achievement rate does, but also other programming and supports that are implemented in the third grade to prepare students for promotion to fourth grade. The promotion rate takes a much broader view of student performance. We support the reporting out of whether a district or building is making progress in improving literacy in grades kindergarten through three. But the information provided should focus on those students who are meeting grade-level rates on diagnostic tests, and not the percentage of students moving from “off track” to “on track.” All students should be counted, and not just a small number who are “off track.”

Chair Brenner and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on SB 145. We are glad to answer any questions you may have.