



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 25, 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 continue to express our appreciation to Senator Brenner for developing legislation that overhauls Ohio's school report card and to the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee for tackling this complex issue. We all agree that it is important to have a school report card that is equitable, fair, and understandable while also providing accountability and informing school improvement.

In previous testimony, we provided an overview of those components of SB 145 that are positive advances in revising Ohio's school report card. Those include:

- The State Board working with stakeholders to establish performance criteria;
- The inclusion of an arrow graph to show performance over an extended period of time;
- The use of overall Value Added data to measure the Progress component;
- “Report only” information in the Graduation component that helps the district

share the story of students who have not graduated, yet are still being served;
and

- To the extent possible, the inclusion of data from summer administration of the Third Grade English/Language Arts assessment in the measure of the Early Literacy component.

Our testimony also provided areas of concerns for our members. Those included:

- Changing the name of “Gap Closing” to “Equity;” as the component is designed it is not a measure of equity;
- Including Prepared for Success as a measured component; and
- Using the “achievement” rate on the reading segment of the third grade English/ Language Arts assessment as opposed to the promotion rate of third graders since performance on a single assessment does not recognize other programming and supports that are implemented in the third grade to prepare students for promotion to fourth grade.

We also expressed concerns with the continued use of the A through F grading system. Substitute SB 145 has transitioned to a star system, which is a step forward; however, we continue to have concerns with the use of a five-star system. Any five-level system equates too easily to the current grading system, and it is likely that the media will continue to equate the stars to letter grades. In addition, it is noted that a star system is used in other ways, such as rating commercial products, hospitals, and preschools. The compelling difference is that these ratings are based on programming or simply user ratings. In many cases, the use of star ratings is subjective. They are not used to communicate the results of high-stakes tests, such as Ohio’s school report card. The star system also creates a two-step process: first, see the number of stars, then refer to descriptors that explain what the stars mean. Additionally, the descriptors for the stars applied to component ratings are different than the descriptors used for the summative rating of the school or district, further complicating the rating system.

It has been noted, and rightfully so, that many of our districts have a variety of languages used in the homes of their students and that a star system makes the report card more understandable to non-English-speaking parents. The use of a star system assumes that this is all that non-English speaking families are interested in. It understates and dismisses their interest in having access to all elements of the report card. Our public schools across the state make important materials available to parents in a variety of languages and provide translators to non-English speaking parents for important events such as IEP meetings. It is not beyond reason to expect that our school report cards are provided by ODE in a variety of languages.

Our organizations support the rating system used in House Bill 200. It is a straight-forward, six-level rating system that clearly states, in one step, a school’s or district’s performance on each of the measured components. The ratings in HB 200 have been termed as “actively misleading,” yet these ratings are based on Massachusetts’ report card system, which is viewed as a model for school report cards.

We oppose the summative rating of a school or district that would continue to be used in SB 145. It has been noted in testimony from the Fordham Institute on May 11, 2021 that a summative rating “focuses public attention on the general academic quality of a school contributing to both transparency and fairness.” We disagree—a summative rating does exactly the opposite. 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 request the elimination of a summative rating in order to keep focus on the more important component ratings.

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.