



**Senator Andrew O. Brenner – 19<sup>th</sup> District**  
**Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee**  
**March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022**  
**Senate Bill 306 – Sponsor Testimony**

Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for hearing sponsor testimony today on Senate Bill 306.

In October of last year, this committee heard testimony on findings from researchers at the Ohio State University on the academic performance of students in Ohio since the start of the pandemic. Doctors Kogan and Lavertu's examination of student learning through spring of 2021's state assessments indicated that a serious and significant decrease in student learning has occurred since the pandemic began in spring of that year.

I will not restate the contents of that presentation today, but in summary, schools saw an 8% decrease in the number of students demonstrating proficiency in English language arts and a 15% decrease in mathematics. Certain student populations and sub-groups evidence an even greater decrease in their achievement, including minority students, economically disadvantaged students, special education students, and English language learners. Ohio students were estimated to be up to half a year behind in English language arts learning and up to an entire year behind in mathematics learning. The Superintendent's presentation before this committee in December shed further light on the significantly reduced attainment observed over the last two school years.

The prolonged interruption of in-person learning resulted in drastic personal and academic consequences for our state's students, teachers, and parents. If left unaddressed, reduced academic attainment is projected to result in a 3% loss of lifetime income for affected students, culminating in a 6% decrease in future state GDP. Full remediation will require a comprehensive approach and will likely take years to complete.

The substitute bill before this committee today seeks to bolster the remediation efforts that are underway in our state. This legislation would establish a structure whereby a statewide tutoring option would be implemented for our students most in need of those services. The state superintendent of public instruction would create a program to provide tutoring and remedial education services in reading, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies to students at public and chartered nonpublic schools that choose to participate.

Retired teachers and substitute teachers, as well as other individuals eligible per standards established by the superintendent, would be able to apply to participate as either volunteer or paid tutors. Tutors would be trained through a course developed by the ESC of Central Ohio in consultation with the state superintendent. Once they have been trained, tutors would be placed directly into participating schools and districts, coordinated by their regional educational service

centers. Each participating school will ultimately decide how best to incorporate tutors into their students' lesson plans. Tutoring could take place before, during, or after school, or on breaks or weekends. Schools would also have the option to utilize tutors in a virtual setting, if they so choose.

The bill sets aside two million dollars in federal funds allocated in House Bill 169 to address learning loss. These funds will be used to develop and implement training for tutors as well as reimburse the costs of their background checks and enrollment in RAPBACK. I would also like to stress that this bill explicitly states that this program does not prohibit a school or district from utilizing other tutoring services.

As I mentioned previously in my testimony, remediation of the learning loss from COVID will likely last for years. While we do not know how long this particular program will be operational, the bill is written in anticipation of a multi-year effort. Once the program is established, the Department of Education will conduct three annual reviews, beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, on the program's effectiveness in providing tutoring and remedial education to students.

In his state of the state address last week, Governor DeWine said that he will need the General Assembly's assistance and ideas to help Ohio's students. The intent of this legislation is to do just that by providing a streamlined, statewide option for people who want to provide tutoring, and for schools that have a strong need for those same individuals. Doing so will help get our students back on track, alleviate pressure on teachers and parents, and improve the academic and overall wellbeing of Ohio's students.

Members of the committee, thank you for hearing my sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 306. While work continues on improving the provisions before you, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have today.