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OHIO PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

OHIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
Senate Bill 240 – Opposed
March 29, 2022

Good afternoon Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Ohio Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee. My name is Scott DiMauro, a high school social studies teacher from Worthington with 16 years of classroom teaching experience and currently serving as President of the Ohio Education Association (OEA). On behalf of the OEA's approximately 122,000 members, thank you for this opportunity to provide Interested Party testimony on SB 240.

SB 240 permits a nonprofit operator and four or more charter schools it operates to merge into a "charter school network" if certain conditions are met.

Concerns raised by the "charter school network" proposal in SB 240 include the following:

- The "charter school network" proposal appears to expand the role of charter school operators at the expense of charter school sponsors in determining the future of a school. This is contrary to the overall design of Ohio's charter school law, which places sponsors in the primary role of school oversight (pursuant to contracts with ODE), while allowing a school's governing board to hire an operator as a vendor.
- Charter schools with the lowest ratings (one-star or two-star) could avoid restrictions on changing sponsors by joining a "charter school network" (SB 240 only requires the majority of the network's schools be three-stars). Ohio law requires the lowest-rated charter schools to receive approval from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) before changing sponsors. However, SB 240 does not require ODE approval (or even approval of the sponsor) before such a school joins a "charter school network," even though doing so could result in a change of sponsor for a school. Current law requiring the lowest-rated charter schools to receive ODE approval of sponsor changes is designed to prevent the practice of "sponsor hopping," whereby schools seek to change sponsors in order to avoid closure.
- Merging numerous charter schools into a single school that may have multiple sponsors fundamentally changes the design of Ohio's charter school law, which requires one sponsor to assume responsibility for exercising oversight of a school. Multiple sponsors of a "charter school network" may result in duplication, confusion, and conflict with regard to charter school oversight.



- SB 240 does not require a charter school's sponsor to approve a school joining a "charter school network." If a school can unilaterally join a "charter school network" without the approval of its sponsor (or even against the wishes of the sponsor), it may become difficult for any sponsor to exert effective oversight of a charter school. Sponsors would be further undermined by the bill's provision allowing a charter school network to request a sponsor to relinquish oversight of the school to another sponsor more favored by the network.
- The LSC Fiscal Note indicates that SB 240 may negatively impact state foundation funding, particularly disadvantaged pupil impact aid, for charter schools that merge to form a charter school network. The funding impact of the bill, including the implications of using multiple "Internal Retrieval Numbers" (IRN) for schools, merits further review.

Thank you for your consideration of this feedback on SB 240.