

December 5, 2022

Dear Honorable Representatives of the Ohio Senate:

The Ohio Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (OACTE), a state affiliate of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, represents teacher educators across all of Ohio's public and private institutions. The State University Education Deans (SUED) and the Ohio Association of Private Colleges of Teacher Education (OAPCTE) represent the leadership of all teacher education programs in Ohio. Together, we wish to inquire about specific details related to SB 178.

The intent of SB 178 is to enact legislation to reform the functions and responsibilities of the State Board of Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Department of Education.

Any changes to the structure or leadership of ODE may potentially have an impact on the processing of teacher licenses. Maintaining high-quality licensure requirements for teachers is essential. Strong licensure requirements make for better teaching and higher-quality student learning, which is in the best interest of all Ohioans.

The current bill mentions teacher licensure briefly but without any details about how the standards and assurances of having well-prepared and qualified teachers would be maintained under the revised structure. Please address what implications there may be for Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) in terms of providing quality and consistency in processes related to teacher licensure.

We request that wording be added to ensure that licensure standards and processes for educators in Ohio remain the purview of an independent, professional office that will maintain the quality and stability of processes. We support the State Board and the state Superintendent retaining broad powers regarding educator licensure. Additionally, establishing a liaison position, held by an EPP representative, would allow education-related ODE groups direct access to experienced and professional advice on how any changes made in this arena eventually affect the teacher workforce and those it serves.

One of our shared goals is to strengthen educator preparation in Ohio. Please assist us in achieving this goal by providing clear and concise language that ensures that licensure standards and processes are led by professional educators with expertise in the skills and knowledge needed to guide and support Ohio's children as they learn.

Your help and response are appreciated.

Sincerely,

Mary Heather Munger, President

Ohio Association of Colleges of Teacher Education

James C. Hannon, Chairperson State University Education Deans

Diana Garlough, President

Ohio Association of Private Colleges of Teacher Education