

House Bill 12 Opposition Testimony from Antoinette Miranda

Chairman Bird, Vice Chair Fowler Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson, and committee members, my name is Antoinette Miranda, and I am a resident of Franklin County, Ohio. I'm a State School Board member representing District #6, a school psychologist, a professor, a parent, and an advocate for public education. I am here to share my opposition to House Bill 12, and I do not speak on behalf of the board.

I have been in education in some form my whole adult life. My work has always sought to improve education, especially for marginalized and vulnerable students. Unfortunately, this bill is an overreach. It seeks to give an unprecedented amount of power to the Ohio Governor over the Ohio Education system and significantly reduce the powers of the State Board of Education. I have been a State Board Member since 2017 and represent District 6, where I won 62% of the vote in my second term. However, due to gerrymandering redistricting, I now represent five different counties that were previously with another Board member.

Regardless, I pledge to advocate for ALL children in the state of Ohio, irrespective of whether I represent them. I've heard multiple reasons why there needs to be this massive overhaul.

It is simply a smokescreen that seeks to politicize our educational enterprise and doesn't solve real issues facing public education. I have yet to hear solutions for raising test scores, reducing absenteeism, improving working and learning conditions, and disparate student outcomes. If you think putting someone in the Governor's office will solve these problems then you are mistaken. But let's be honest, these bills ultimately are about *privatizing* and seizing local control of schools in Ohio. The State Board of Education is used as a scapegoat to justify these bills. If this passes, the Governor will control public education policy, budget, funding, and priorities with little oversight or accountability. The real needs of students and educators are the least of their concerns. In the National Governor's Association State Education Trends for 2023, State takeover was not one of them. This list included K-12 funding, Workforce Development and Career and Technical Education, Teacher Staffing, Early Learning, Academic Support, Physical and Mental Health, and Postsecondary Affordability.

The reality of this bill is that Eliminating the State Board of Education silences our voters' voices and takes away advocacy for all students in the state of Ohio. We each represent communities that are diverse and unique. What is clear is that one size doesn't fit all. I would suggest that you heed those areas in the National Governor's Association State Education Trends and work with the State Board of Education to continue to do the job they were voted to do. And if you have this unspoken magic solution for catapulting our education system into a top ten ranking from our current rank of 31st, based on US News and World Report, please share and not keep it a secret.

I would implore you to let education professionals do their job. I suggest you refer to evidence-based research on best practices in transforming schools. Research has consistently demonstrated that transforming schools takes 3-5 years. We have models of effective transformation but it takes time, energy, dedicated professionals, and, most importantly, effective leadership. The Comer Model is one such example that has been successfully implemented in over 1000 schools across the nation. Ron Edmonds, Harvard professor and the father of the effective schools movement in the United States, defined the characteristics of the effective school which still hold up today. They were first introduced in

1966. Thousands of schools today base their programs and procedures on effective school research. Those characteristics of schools include the following:

Instructional Leadership • Clear and Focused Mission • Safe and Orderly Environment • Climate of High Expectations • Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress • Positive Home-School Relations • Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task

Citizens of Ohio should be concerned that this bill will do little to transform our lowest-performing schools. I suspect punishment will be the weapon to try to improve the lowest-performing schools' performance. But we already have examples that don't work: Academic Distress Commission schools, and NCLB which created a competition mind-set with the thinking that low-performing schools would suddenly do better. None of these succeeded in improving student outcomes. Because the underlying causes for the achievement gaps were not directly addressed.

If we don't want to be back here 3, 4, or 5 years from now giving the powers back to the Board of Education because the Governor would own the abysmal failure of public education, I would suggest that legislators work with ODE and the State Board of Education on evidence-based solutions to move our education system forward in positive, transformative ways. For example, we could start with funding for universal quality preschool which has consistently shown it is the most effective intervention for helping students to be kindergarten ready.

Thank you for your time, and I hope legislators will make the right decision for Ohio's students.