Start with your introduction:

Chair Lehner, Vice Chair Huffman and members of the Senate Education Committee, I am Dr. Charles Kokiko, Superintendent of the Jefferson County Educational Service Center in Jefferson County, and I testify today in support of Senate Bill 216.

Describe your district:

The Jefferson County Educational Service Center provides leadership and services to students, school districts, and other stakeholders in Jefferson, Harrison, and Columbiana Counties representing nearly 11,000 students in 7 districts, one MRDD and a JVS.

Parts of SB 216 that we are most supportive of:

At this time I would like to highlight 3 components of Senate Bill 216 that have the highest level of support from our ESC superintendents: (1) removing Student Growth Measure from teacher evaluation, (2) establishing a single substitute license, and (3) consolidating teacher licenses into two grade bands: K-8 and 6-12.

In regards to the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System, we believe the teacher performance aspect of OTES has had a positive influence on instructional discussion between teachers and administrators. However, we maintain the belief that standardized tests are only one piece of information, and there is not evidence to support the effectiveness of using these measures to approximate 50%, or even 35%, of a teacher evaluation.

Researchers studying Value Added Measure results have doubted whether the methodology can accurately identify more and less effective teachers. One reason for this is that Value Added Measures have proven to be unstable across statistical models, years and classes that teachers teach.

There are many factors that have been found to have a strong influence on student learning outside of the teachers to whom test scores are attached. These would include, but not be limited to, influence of students’ other teachers, tutors or instructional specialists; school attendance; out-of-school learning experiences; well-educated and supportive parents and family resources, mobility and the influence of neighborhood peers and classmates.

In the words of well-respected education researcher Linda Darling-Hammond, “recognizing the technical and practical limitations of what test scores can accurately reflect, we conclude that changes in test scores should be used only as a modest part of a broader set of evidence about teacher practice.”

Student Learning Objectives have been another issue with Student Growth Measures. Despite the best efforts by districts to ensure that these measures are valid and reliable forms of feedback on teacher effectiveness, we think most would agree they have fallen short of the mark. The time, energy and resources that districts and personnel have invested in creating, reviewing, modifying and approving these local measures would be better spent elsewhere.

Establishing a single substitute license would be beneficial to our districts in filling longer term openings that currently remain unfilled or filled with rotating substitutes to comply with current law. The current teacher shortage has greatly reduced the number of available substitute teachers and the proposed change in substitute licensure would allow districts greater flexibility in filling needs. We have also witnessed fewer retired teachers coming back to substitute. They have attributed two main causes: (1) they have worked long enough due to retirement changes and (2) complexities of renewing their licenses.

Many schools in Ohio today are configured as PK-4; 5-8; and 9-12. The current licensure structure does not support the reality in many of these buildings making it difficult to staff certain positions and reducing the flexibility of districts to meet their personnel needs.

References

Problems with the use of student test scores to evaluate teachers. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.epi.org/publication/bp278/