

Senate Finance Committee

Interested Party Testimony HB 166

Presented by Darold Johnson, Legislative Director

June 13, 2019

Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Burke, and Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Finance Committee, I am Darold Johnson, Director of Legislation for the Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT). We represent members in higher education, K-12, and children’s services. Today, we urge the Senate to accept the House language addressing school turnaround. The language in HB 166 is the same as HB 154, which passed the House with a vote of 83 to 12 on May 1st.

House Bill 154 is evidence-based and is driven from research conducted by the American Institute for Research (AIR) study of school turnaround in Massachusetts. AIR’s research is a culmination of five years of study. Their results are the foundation of HB 154’s language. It is a roadmap for moving forward. It is a worthy starting point because it reflects the concerns of local school board members, teachers, and superintendents. It was the subject of three hearings, a committee vote, a vote of the House.

AIR’s research provides clarity for next steps, and fleshes out roles and responsibilities for teachers, parents and administrators. Our underlining principle is that the current takeover plan doesn’t work.

The time for pointing fingers is over. It’s time to support language that builds up all education partners. It’s time to create state capacity for helping buildings turn around by providing all education stakeholders (ODE, OSBA, BASA, OEA, OFT, principal associations, ESCs, and higher education institutions) a role in turning around a school building. It’s time for all-hands-on-deck. It’s not time to rearrange the chairs on the Titanic.

Believing that ADCs are the hammer that has stimulated change is not accurate. Using the fear of chaos, is not motivating factor; rather, we should focus rather on the certainty of success.

Research supporting HB 154 underlining Language

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/guidance.html>

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/howitworks/reports.html>

Key elements in HB 154

1. Develop a school improvement plan based on a multi-tiered, evidence-based model. The plan may, but is not required to, include measurable benchmarks for improvement in (1) parent and family engagement, (2) creating a culture of academic success (3) building a culture of student support (4) student attendance (5) dismissal and exclusion rates (6) student safety and discipline (7) student promotion and graduation and dropout rates.

2. The Bill gives the Ohio Department of Education and the Superintendent time to develop what will happen in year four, allowing for more time for this discussion to happen. This is a responsible action and appropriate to have this discussion with those who more experience with education, turnaround, and allow the public to testify as well.

What is happening now?

East Cleveland City School Board, a district in ADC because one of its six schools is an F, is working with the school boards of Lorain and Youngstown and mid-size urban school district and learning from each other how to improve outcomes for students. On Saturday, June 8th, I attended their meeting in East Cleveland and the room was filled with community members, board members from the three ADC locals and nearby superintendents who have to keep their district out of the ADC pipeline. The superintendents from Warrenville Heights and Raymond Heights shared best practices for the other districts. Also, the board members from Lorain and Youngstown have developed their own plans for what steps to take after they regain control of their school district.

Districts are working hard to improve their teaching and learning opportunities. HB 154 will help them continue on that path it will also return democracy to those districts currently under ADC.

This concludes my testimony and I welcome any questions. Attached to my testimony is an outline of what it takes to turnaround a school district in three years.

What research says needs to happen for turnaround in three years.

Turnaround Practice 1 (Leadership, Shared Responsibility, and Professional Collaboration)

#### Detailed Examples.

##### In Achievement Gain Schools

###### Year 1

* School leadership is deliberate, distributed, and focused on increasing student achievement
* *An instructional- and results-oriented principal has galvanized individual and collective responsibility for the improved achievement of all students through:*
* An explicit focus on continuously improving instruction that involves regular structures for collecting and analyzing data that directly informs teacher-specific instruction.
* Frequent and ongoing visits to classrooms that provide positive and useful feedback to teachers, as perceived by teachers. Peer observation and common planning time are keys to helping improve learning. Having financial resources are also key to turnaround.
* Ongoing modeling of and support for a safe, orderly, and engaging environment for teachers and students.

###### Year 2

* A community of practice has been developed through distributed leadership, shared responsibility, and professional collaboration.
* *School leaders and professional staff in achievement gain schools have assumed collective responsibility and ownership of the pursuit of greater student achievement. Strong leaders and proactive leadership teams intentionally foster collective responsibility by mobilizing structures, strategies, practices and the use of resources for the ongoing evaluation and improvement of instruction.*
* *Principals* are actively sustaining an effective system of shared leadership and responsibility throughout the school with an articulated focus on high-quality instruction and response to student needs.
* *Leaders and teachers* are jointly committed to and have assumed shared ownership and collective responsibility for improving student achievement.
* *The professional environment* is one of mutual respect, teamwork, and accountability.

###### Year 3

* A strong, distributed leadership structure is actively monitoring and pursuing efforts to increase student achievement through a robust system of ongoing student assessment informing tiered interventions and the delivery of high-quality instruction throughout the building
* *Sustained leadership pursues increased student achievement through the development of robust and effective systems of ongoing student assessment and tiered responses by teachers, the deployment of student-specific interventions, a focus on the improvement of classroom instruction through targeted training and teacher-specific feedback and coaching, which is actively managed and monitored throughout the building by teachers.*
* *School leadership* is actively monitoring student achievement, student assessments, instruction, and effectiveness of tiered responses to student needs throughout the school.
* Where needed, school leadership provides targeted instructional guidance, support, and feedback to teachers.
* The school has created a culture of shared ownership improvement throughout the building for the well-being and achievement of their students.Peer observation and common planning time are keys to helping improve learning. Having financial resources are also key to turnaround.