

Toledo Public Schools

Board of Education

Educational Campus

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Testimony on Academic Distress Commissions, Stephanie Eichenberg, Toledo Public Schools Boardof Education

Chairwoman Lehner, Vice Chair Terhar, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today regarding the proposed Senate amendment to the Academic Distress Commission proposals in Am. Sub. House Bill (HB) 166. I am Stephanie Eichenberg, President of the Toledo Public Schools Board of Education.

As noted previously, Toledo Public Schools has made great progress for a large, urban school district so it is incumbent upon me to begin by pointing out that this proposed language does not make allowances for progress made before it’s reflected in the state report card.

**Value Add**

A substantial problem with the Senate revised language is the dependence on the state report card measure Value Add. The measure is currently biased for all large districts. This bias is responsible for districts that perform well on standardized tests, like Olentangy which has a high proficiency score, to earn a “D” grade on the Value-Add Measure. With the current design the Value Add subscores for a large district are guaranteed to be either an A or an F, which makes the measure one that should not be used for any official decision making.

The reason for this is simple math. The current measure for Value Add ends the measure by dividing growth gains, positive or negative, by the standard error. In the case of a test standard error is used to measure the reliability of test and is open to two types of error, random or systematic. Whether a student is sick when they take a test is a random error. A systematic error would be poor question design, such as a math question that had overcomplicated verbiage, so it improperly measures reading skill not math. Others will measure standard error based on sample size, but in the case of school testing, the test is a census (represents every measurable student), not a sample (measured 100 students in a district to read the entire district). Standard errors are derived as a function of sample size, assuming if you measure 800 out of 1,000 students in a district, that is a more reliable measure than measuring 100 of 101 students in a small district, simply because there are more measures.

One can see the fallacy in considering 800 of 1,000 a better measure than 100 of 101 for accuracy. Having more measures does not mean any smaller percentage of students is not feeling well on a given day in a larger district or a smaller district, nor woke up late and had to rush to school without breakfast. Nor can we assume that a different percentage of students will be impacted by systemic errors like poor question design.

While there is some validity in very small sample sizes having greater deviation, this last step of Value Add creates an unacceptable bias due to fluctuation in school district sizes. This is illustrated in the comparison between Toledo Public Schools and Springfield City Schools.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Toledo City** | **Number of Students** | **Growth Gain** | **Standard Error** | **Indexed for Value Add Measure** |  | **Springfield City** | **Number of Students** | **Growth Gain** | **Standard Error** | **Indexed for Value Add Measure** |
| **Mathematics 4** | 4651 | -1.2414 | 0.176 | -7.05 |  | **Mathematics 4** | 1667 | 0.3402 | 0.2932 | 1.16 |
| **Mathematics 5** | 4521 | 1.043 | 0.171 | 6.1 |  | **Mathematics 5** | 1536 | 1.4247 | 0.2904 | 4.91 |
| **Mathematics 6** | 4370 | -0.9425 | 0.1675 | -5.62 |  | **Mathematics 6** | 1485 | 0.94 | 0.286 | 3.29 |
| **Mathematics 7** | 4308 | 1.5427 | 0.1611 | 9.58 |  | **Mathematics 7** | 1444 | 1.4 | 0.2783 | 5.03 |
| **Mathematics 8** | 3880 | -2.773 | 0.1859 | -14.91 |  | **Mathematics 8** | 1189 | -1.7566 | 0.3279 | -5.35 |
| **Algebra I All** | **5615** | **-1.4961** | **0.2451** | **-6.1** |  | **Algebra I All** | **2043** | **-4.7109** | **0.3552** | **-13.26** |
| **Geometry All** | **4438** | **-0.5987** | **0.2837** | **-2.11** |  | **Geometry All** | **1529** | **-6.26** | **0.4391** | **-14.25** |
| **English Language Arts 4** | 4649 | -2.4056 | 0.2055 | -11.7 |  | **English Language Arts 4** | 1647 | -0.1318 | 0.343 | -0.38 |
| **English Language Arts 5** | 4540 | 2.2738 | 0.2022 | 11.25 |  | **English Language Arts 5** | 1547 | 0.7318 | 0.344 | 2.13 |
| **English Language Arts 6** | 4372 | 0.4788 | 0.1957 | 2.45 |  | **English Language Arts 6** | 1479 | -0.0049 | 0.3342 | -0.01 |
| **English Language Arts 7** | 4307 | 1.2247 | 0.1882 | 6.51 |  | **English Language Arts 7** | 1448 | 1.9879 | 0.3252 | 6.11 |
| **English Language Arts 8** | 4096 | -0.4998 | 0.1921 | -2.6 |  | **English Language Arts 8** | 1511 | 0.8642 | 0.316 | 2.73 |
| **English Language Arts I All** | **5429** | **-1.12** | **0.2059** | **-5.43** |  | **English Language Arts I All** | **1943** | **-5.3352** | **0.3188** | **-16.73** |
| **English Language Arts II All** | **4512** | **-2.0473** | **0.2365** | **-8.65** |  | **English Language Arts II All** | **1565** | **-6.0793** | **0.3755** | **-16.19** |
| **Science 5** | 4308 | -5.4178 | 0.4345 | -12.46 |  | **Science 5** | 1495 | -7.2313 | 0.6481 | -11.15 |
| **Science 8** | 3934 | -6.1849 | 0.4042 | -15.3 |  | **Science 8** | 1447 | -5.5571 | 0.6042 | -9.19 |
| **Social Studies 6** | 2870 | -4.9944 | 0.4568 | -10.93 |  | **Social Studies 6** | 948 | -5.716 | 0.7045 | -8.11 |
| **Overall / All Subjects** | **74800** |  |  | **-14.32** |  | **Overall / All Subjects All** | **25293** |  |  | **-14.27** |

Science 8 has very similar measure gains at both districts, at a rate Growth rate of -6.18 and -5.55 for TPS and Springfield respectively, but the index used for Value Add score comes out to -15.3 for TPS and -9.19 for Springfield. A similar effect can be seen in the Social Studies 6 measure. While both positive and negative measures are blown up out of proportions, until such time as a very large district nets an overall slightly positive growth gain, they net to an F.

Toledo and Springfield have nearly the same overall scores of -14.32% and -14.27 despite Toledo Public Schools having more subject close to zero to positive growth in the actual Growth Gain.

Index range with smaller variation from actual introduced by standard error.

Growth Gain from year to year.

Range +2.27 to -6.18.

Index range with smaller variation from actual introduced by standard error.

Growth Gain from year to year.

Range +1.98 to -7.23.

Respectfully, I would submit this is the most egregious mismeasurement of the grade card, and it also figures prominently in the proposed Senate Amendment. Whether deliberate or simply misguided, utilizing this measure as guidance to decide if a district has made proper progress is essentially ensuring the state continues to oversee large districts for longer time periods but not smaller districts, while not ensuring any better quality education.

Not to belabor the statistical points, but Gap Closing really measures proficiency statewide in its current version, and as previously established in testimony, the cut scores for Third Grade Reading Guarantee bounce around in an indication the test itself is not reliably designed enough to base a year’s cut score on the prior year. The Ohio school report card is simply not reliable enough as a base for legislation.

**Other Items in the Amendment**

The language suggests that a district may be judged to have reliably worked with the School Transformation Board (STB) for up to Six years, which indicates for 3-5 years they have been judged to follow the improvement plan, yet not made sufficient progress, and then places that district in Academic Distress and subject to replacement of the local school board among many other punitive provisions. At that point I think it more likely it’s not a failure in leadership, but a misunderstanding of the true nature of the root cause, which the STB previously signed off on. This is unacceptable that a district can cooperate and still be punished. There are many portions of this that are undemocractic, but this is especially outrageous.

I suggest that you revert to the Academic Distress Commission language a it was in the House version of the budget bill rather than this convoluted proposal that relies in bad measurements, at least less the House version does not create a new bureaucracy before the grade card is fixed and more reliable measures can be introduced.

Thank you for your time and consideration.