

SB 219 Testimony

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Thank you for providing me the opportunity to address my concerns regarding the recently changed grade bands for teacher licensure. Below is my testimony.

SB33: *I recognize the current challenges faced by districts to secure appropriately licensed teachers. In fact, I appreciate the language in SB33 that permits districts to allow educators to teach up to two grade levels outside the grade band designated on their license.*

EPP notice: *However, I am concerned about the unintended consequences of some of the other language in SB33. The language around this issue was not known to Ohio's educator preparation programs (EPP's) until after it was signed by Governor DeWine. Had Ohio's EPP's been notified of the language regarding licensure bands, these concerns would have been brought to the attention of our legislators and the Governor sooner.*

Quality of learning in Ohio: *The changes in SB33 regarding changing licensure grade bands from grades PreK-5, 4-9, and 7-12, to new grade bands consisting of PreK-8 and 6-12 will have a substantially negative impact on classrooms, educator preparation, but, most importantly, on the quality of learning for our PK-12 students, including Governor DeWine's ReadOhio Initiative, as it will minimize the focus on a strong knowledge base and therefore the effectiveness of teachers.*

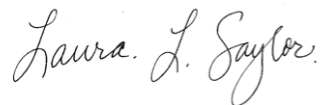
Specialized preparation for middle level teachers: *Current licensure bands represent an extension beyond the grade bands which were established over 20 years ago (PreK-3, 4-9, and 7-12) when Ohio responded to the strong research that indicates the critical importance of specialized preparation for middle level teachers. Middle level teacher preparation and licensure in Ohio was enacted to ensure that students in grades 4-9 have the best opportunity to gain the in-depth knowledge and skills in the areas of mathematics, science, languages arts and social studies.*

Impact on young children: *The additional extension of the grade bands as outlined in SB33 will result in early childhood preparation for three and four-year-old children becoming diluted, resulting in teachers who are less prepared to work with young children whose brains are rapidly developing and need effective instruction in nurturing environments.*

Threat to the Governor DeWine's ReadOhio Initiative: *Further, eliminating the current emphasis on Primary Grades will jeopardize the Governor DeWine's ReadOhio Initiative as EPP's may not be able to focus on making the change to the Science of Reading at the same time as making huge changes in their curriculum that will prepare teachers for teaching the content in grades 6, 7, and 8.*

Impact on content knowledge: Reducing the choice of licensure to just Pre-k to Grade 8 or Grades 7-12, not only dilutes the importance of each unique developmental level but also creates an issue in the degree of student content knowledge. This would impact the level of success for Ohio's school students passing state achievement tests " especially in reading and mathematics. This could also lead to problems in high school scores and college and career readiness. The possible impacts on Ohio industry and economic growth could be detrimental to Ohio's growth.

Threat to teaching workforce: EPP's in Ohio meet rigorous standards for program approval and accreditation. If the grade band is broadened to P-8 it would require a college student to need more courses and for teacher candidates to incur more time and debt to be prepared to enter the teaching workforce. The increased course load may result in 5-year programs to meet the standards placed on EPP's in Ohio. This may lead to lower enrollment in EPP's and reduce the number of well-prepared teachers available to Ohio's schools, making it even more difficult for them to recruit teachers.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura L. Saylor".

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