



OAGC Testimony on SB145
May 6, 2021

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor, members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on SB145, the report card reform bill. As previous witnesses have recounted, this bill is the culmination of almost two years of deliberations of a diverse workgroup. I served as part of this workgroup, and my major focus was equitable treatment of subgroups and transparency for parents and the public at-large.

While other witnesses have given a broad overview of SB145, I would like to briefly focus specifically on issues that will highlight the performance of Ohio's subgroups. SB145 moves many of the measures regarding Ohio's subgroups into an equity component. This component is a revamped version of the current gap closing measure. This new measure will provide a clearer focus on the unique needs within each of these subgroups. In addition, SB145 retains the current minimum subgroup N-size of 15, which ensures greater visibility of small subgroups so that they do not get lost. Raising this N-size (as proposed in HB200) would cause many students to fall through the cracks of accountability in districts and buildings. SB145 also moves chronic absenteeism and the gifted performance indicator from the indicators met measure from the current report card into the equity measure which is a much better fit.

With regard to transparency, OAGC always views policy with an eye toward how parents will best understand what is happening in their district and school building. SB145 will provide many ways for parents to be able to view the overall status of their district by viewing the components and overall grade not just as a single measure using stars, but with easy to understand descriptions, color-coding and trend lines. These measures will be federally compliant and provide a straight-forward view for parents.

One small item that is included in SB145 that OAGC appreciates is the renaming of Ohio assessment level currently known as "accelerated" to "accomplished." The term accelerated has a very specific educational meaning. Telling a parent that their child has an accelerated test score has caused problems in many districts who have had to inform parents this label does not mean their child can be grade skipped. (This change is also included in the proposed report card bill in the House, HB200.)

From my discussions with parents, they are interested in the following information from report cards:

1. How is the local district and school building doing in terms of performance and growth?
2. If their child has a special need, how well is the district/school building providing for those needs?
3. When their child graduates will they be prepared for the next step whether that is college or something else?

From OAGC's perspective, SB145 does a fairly good job in answering those questions.

Is SB145 perfect? Of course not. I will tell you from the hours of discussion and debate, every organization in the workgroup that contributed toward this bill had to compromise. What would I change? In particular, I would have kept the sub-group demotion on value-added. I still have difficulty thinking that a school or district should receive an A or five stars if, for example, the students with disability sub-group, had D or F, or one to two stars. But I was clearly a minority voice on this issue. Other groups had strong likes or dislikes on other areas where they had to compromise. That is the nature of consensus. I would say, however, that every group was able to share their views honestly and that those views were respectfully considered. At the end of the day, SB145 encapsulates the goals of the group which were to ensure transparent, equitable, fair and accurate report card reform.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

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