



The OEA will lead the way for continuous improvement of public education while advocating for members and the learners they serve.

Ohio Education Association

PROPONENT TESTIMONY: SENATE BILL 229 (R-Gardner)

November 19, 2013

Chair Lehner, Ranking Member Sawyer and members of the Senate Education Committee, my name is Scott DiMauro. I am the Vice President of the Ohio Education Association (OEA). On behalf of our 121,000 members, the OEA strongly supports Senate Bill (SB) 229 (R-Gardner). This legislation would help make Ohio's new system for evaluating teachers more effective, fair and efficient in two important ways.

First, SB 229 would change the academic growth factor percentage on teacher evaluations to 35%, from the current 50%, while retaining local control for school districts to attribute an additional percentage of not more than fifteen percent to the academic growth factor. This proposed change will not only make evaluations fairer, it will also instill more confidence in the evaluation system by better calibrating the relative weight of multiple measures. The result will be a stronger and improved teacher evaluation system in Ohio.

The primary purpose in developing student growth measures has been to give teachers and administrators another diagnostic indicator to guide classroom instruction and student intervention. The adjustment that SB 229 would make to the academic growth factor percentage is in keeping with sound public policy. Student growth measures based on tests were not designed to be a reliable means for making high stakes decisions such as teacher evaluations.

In addition, there is considerable research that raises concerns about the accuracy of student test data used in teacher evaluations. These concerns only grow when the use of student tests is based on only one year of data. Battelle for Kids, the organization that developed and piloted Ohio's value-added student growth measure for grades 4-8, reading and math, recommends that student growth measures comprise 25% to 35% of teacher evaluations. SB 229 would make Ohio's teacher evaluations system consistent with the recommendations of Ohio's premier experts on the use of student growth measures. For all of these reasons, the OEA strongly supports the academic growth factor provision in SB 229.

Second, providing more flexibility for school districts in determining the frequency of evaluations for highly rated teachers will help schools focus the limited time and resources of evaluators on teachers who are new to the profession and teachers who need to raise their evaluation ratings. This approach will also help strengthen Ohio's teacher evaluation system and better serve students by targeting evaluations where they are most likely to result in improved teacher performance. In addition, it will help school districts better allocate available time and resources to ensure that these evaluations are as thorough as possible and provide teachers meaningful feedback on improving their practice.

Thank you for your consideration and I am available for any questions you may have.

