



## **House Primary and Secondary Education Committee**

### **House Bill 316 Testimony**

**Ohio Association of School Administrators**

**Ohio School Boards Association**

**Ohio Association of School Business Officials**

**Alliance for High Quality Education**

**Buckeye Association of School Administrators**

**June 9, 2021**

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify as interested parties for House Bill (HB) 316, which would establish the Supplemental School Year Program. I am Barbara Shaner with the Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators. Joining me in this testimony are Katie Johnson with the Ohio Association of School Business Officials, Nicole Piscitani with the Ohio School Boards Association, and Tony Podojil, with the Alliance for High Quality Education. Also represented in this testimony is Kevin Miller of the Buckeye Association of School Administrators, who is not able to join us this morning.

Our organizations represent public school principals, district treasurers/CFOs, business managers and other school business officials, boards of education, and superintendents from around the state.

HB 316 provides high school students enrolled in public and chartered nonpublic schools in the 2020-2021 school year with the opportunity to retake or supplement the grades or courses they completed this past school year during the COVID-19 pandemic. We begin by thanking the bill sponsors, Representative Jarrells and Representative Hillyer, for reaching out to our groups as HB 316 was developed. We believe improvements were made to earlier bill drafts based upon our feedback.

The current version of the bill would allow local boards of education to make a determination if, and to what degree, their district will take part in the Supplemental School Year Program. If a board of education decides to accept any or all of the applications from students to repeat classes or an entire school year, it will be required to develop a plan for implementing the Supplemental School Year Program.

It should be noted that some boards of education already have policies in place which allow students to re-take a course and replace their course grade. All boards of education have the ability to revise their policies, allowing students to re-take a course and replace their grade to address the unique circumstances of the 2020-21 school year.

We understand that some students may have experienced difficulty during the school year and perhaps did not gain the full benefit of a course (or courses) as they would have otherwise. It may be beneficial to these students to be given another opportunity to take those courses to improve their mastery of the standards, while also replacing their grade for the 2020-21 school year with their improved grade.

However, allowing students to repeat all or part of the previous school year will have implications for other students in their school. For instance, under the bill, seniors who have already graduated could return to the school to repeat their senior year, despite what course grades they earned during the 2020-21 school year. While boards of education would have discretion on a case-by-case basis for each student, allowing those students to return could have a ripple effect on those rising seniors who have worked hard for their moment to earn scholarships or to have their time in the sun on their school's athletic team.

The school district must petition the Ohio High School Athletic Association for up to two additional semesters of eligibility for the 2021-22 school year for all students participating in the Supplement School Year Program, including those repeating their senior year. Again, this will impact the student athletes coming up behind the returning students. What is perceived as an opportunity for one student may become a missed opportunity for another.

Under the bill, students would have 30 days after the bill's effective date to request the opportunity to re-take a course or the entire school year. The board of education has another 30 days to determine whether to accept any or all of the requests it receives. This timing could lead to problems with having to revise already established master schedules and adding necessary staff just as the 2021-22 school year is beginning.

Additionally, it is difficult to discern how many graduated seniors in the state might take advantage of the Supplemental School Year Program, but capacity could be an issue for school districts. Staffing, space and in turn, financial resources will be a factor in a board's ability to allow students to repeat courses, particularly if the request is to repeat the full year.

Again, we recognize that the 2020-2021 school year brought with it many challenges that students have never before experienced. HB 316 would allow for local decision-making regarding the Supplemental School Year Program, as each situation is unique. Yet we would be remiss if we did not point out the difficulty in making such decisions and the unintended consequences that may accompany them.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on HB 316. We will be happy to address your questions.