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**THE OHIO 8 COALITION SUPPORTS RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE STATE TESTS FROM
SENATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TESTING**

COLUMBUS, OHIO – The Ohio 8 Coalition supports recent recommendations from the Senate Advisory Committee on Testing that scale back administration of twice yearly tests to once a year for Ohio’s K-12 students and call for more transparency, among other changes.

The Ohio 8 Coalition was represented on the 30-member advisory committee by Julie Sellers, Cincinnati Federation of Teachers President, and Adrian E. Allison, Canton City Schools Superintendent.

Sellers and Allison said: “The Ohio 8 Coalition appreciates the opportunity to be part of the comprehensive, dedicated conversation about Ohio’s state-mandated testing. We are very happy with the recommended changes, which will lessen the burden on our students, allow our schools to spend more time on instruction and provide more transparency during testing. We thank Senator Lehner for her leadership in making sure the committee was focused on building consensus and ensuring that all voices were heard. We look forward to continue to participate in these important discussions.”

According to a press release from State Senator Peggy Lehner (R-Kettering), who chaired the committee, a written recommendation is currently being prepared. It will include the following suggested components:

- The new twice a year administration of tests that occurred this winter and spring should be scaled back to once a year and the tests should be shortened. The testing window should be closer to the end of the school year to provide more time for classroom instruction and less disruption in learning.
- Accommodations for children with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) must be improved and more clearly communicated to parents and schools. Training must be provided for intervention specialists and paraprofessionals who assist students with IEPs.

- Test results must be returned in a timely manner to benefit student instruction – although the group recognized that results from a writing test may not be able to be returned as quickly as the rest of the results.
- Commit to transparency by ensuring test questions and answers must be made available within a reasonable timeframe after the administration of the tests to ensure the tests are aligned to Ohio’s learning standards and that questions are developmentally appropriate for grade level.
- Online testing is necessary and schools must plan to move in that direction; however, local schools must continue to have the option to administer paper/pencil tests for at least the next two school years. State funding for technology based on need should be considered.
- A single technology platform is preferable for next year’s tests. Improvements in technology are needed to ensure smooth administration of the tests.
- A “safe harbor” must be in place that allows results from this year’s tests to be reported but students, teachers or schools should not be penalized for results this year due to the transition to a new test and the concern that results may not accurately reflect a student’s achievement level.
- A comprehensive communications plan must be developed to provide parents, teachers, school leaders and the general public with clearer information about the tests.
- If the current vendors for state tests - PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College & Careers) for the math and English language arts assessments and AIR (American Institute for Research) for the science and social studies assessments will not make changes to the test for next year to accommodate these issues, the Ohio Department of Education must find a test vendor that will.

About The Ohio 8 Coalition: The Ohio 8 Coalition is a strategic alliance composed of the superintendents and teacher union presidents from Ohio’s eight urban school districts – Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo and Youngstown. The Ohio 8 Coalition’s mission is to work with policy makers to improve academic performance, increase graduation rates and close the achievement gap for urban children throughout Ohio. The Coalition carries out its mission by working closely with legislators, educators, parents, labor and community officials. The Coalition brings a shared administrator-teacher voice to help shape state education policy.