



WRITTEN Testimony to House Education Committee

Substitute Senate Bill 19 – Opponent

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Jeff Talbert, Co-Chair, The Ohio 8 Coalition

Superintendent, Canton City Schools

Chairwoman Arthur, Vice Chair Odisio, Ranking Member Brennan, and members of the House Education Committee, my name is Jeff Talbert. I am the Co-Chair of The Ohio 8 Coalition and the Superintendent of Canton City Schools. I appreciate the chance to submit testimony on behalf of our Coalition as an Opponent to Senate Bill 19. The Ohio 8 is a strategic alliance composed of the superintendents and teacher union presidents from the following Ohio urban school districts – ***Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Lorain, Toledo, and Youngstown.***

The removal of Math Intervention and Improvement Plans(MIMPS) and additional flexibility on math acceleration are both welcome changes to Substitute Senate Bill 19. We are, however, still concerned about the following provisions and welcome ongoing discussion in order to address the collective desire to improve math literacy among students in Ohio.

- 1. Selective Application:** If this bill seeks to improve statewide math literacy among students then why would it not apply to all students? Exempting private, parochial, charter, and classical education students does not help address statewide math literacy and it a glaring omission in this legislation.
- 2. Mandating a Single Statewide Software System:** Mandating a single system for all school districts is not only unprecedented but unrealistic. Each community must have the flexibility to maintain current systems that work for their district size, type, and needs. Additionally, such mandates would undermine existing contracts, which could result in unexpected costs to the district and disrupt systems with which educators, administrators, and parents are already familiar and using with success.
- 3. Implementation for the 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 School Years:** requiring implementation for various components with the 1-2 school years is an unrealistic mandate. There must be appropriate preparation and training of educators and staff; development of instructional materials by DEW; sufficient time for communication between DEW and school district

administrators; and timely communication to parents regarding any changes to standards and expectations.

4. **Lack of Alignment with the State K–12 Mathematics Plan:** portions of SB 19 do not clearly align with the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce’s (DEW) statewide mathematics strategy. In particular the flexibility and local control presently offered to districts is undermined by the mandates within the bill, including:
 - a. Absence of a nationally recognized body of research to guide math intervention for grades K-12. What exists for literacy does not exist for math. As a result, this bill is creating mandates based on content that has not been developed.
 - b. Absence of an established statewide evidenced based math intervention framework evidenced based instructional materials, and professional development supports at DEW. Again, the bill created mandates for instruction and learning that educators have not been trained on because that content does not exist.
5. **Conflicts with Gifted and Advanced Learning Policies:** Proposed changes to advanced math placement conflict with how districts currently implement gifted education and do not align with Ohio’s mathematics learning standards. Allowing students who score “accomplished” to have the option of not enrolling in advanced math opportunities is a welcome change. We are, however, still concerned about any provision that would mandate automatic acceleration. Automatic acceleration overrides student and parent choice and runs counter to the fact that standardized test scores do not automatically equate to a student’s ability to succeed in Algebra 1.
6. **Mandated High Dose Tutoring:** High dosage tutoring is not appropriate as a universal mandate. High-dosage tutoring has been studied extensively over the past five years, and the research does not show consistent enough results to justify mandating it for every student receiving math intervention services. It is also extremely expensive to implement with fidelity. When districts are required to provide high-dosage tutoring to large numbers of students, programs are quickly stretched thin, and the quality—and therefore the effectiveness—declines. As a result, the mandate risks producing weaker outcomes for all students rather than targeted, high-quality support for those who need it most. High dosage tutoring should remain an option for districts, but not a mandate.
7. **Unfunded Mandates:** Requires mandates that will absorb significant time, training, and ongoing professional development without providing the funding necessary to implement such mandates effectively.