



THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE

Bringing Greater Accountability to Ohio's Public Schools

Interested Party Testimony
Ohio Senate Education Committee
Ohio Senate Bill 127

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As Prepared for Delivery

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding **Ohio Senate Bill 127** and the policies that will make our public schools more accountable.

My name is Greg R. Lawson. I am a research fellow at **The Buckeye Institute**, an independent research and educational institution—a think tank—whose mission is to advance free-market public policy in the states.

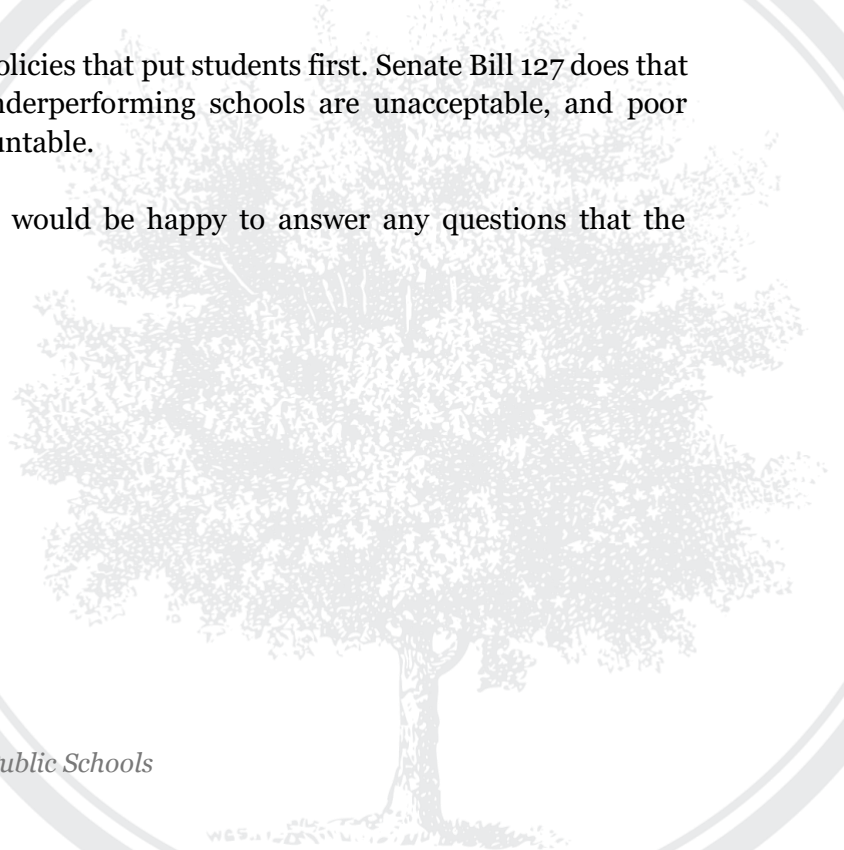
Senate Bill 127 is a critical piece of legislation that addresses chronic underperformance in our public schools with commonsense reforms. Among other things, the bill replaces leadership and staff, consolidates school districts, and partners with proven management organizations and educational service centers with expertise in school improvement.

Recent **Ohio report cards** and the **National Assessment of Educational Progress** again confirm that Ohio has tolerated mediocre performance in its lowest-scoring public schools for far too long. By defining a “poor performing school” as one in the bottom five percent for performance and 10 percent for progress over three consecutive years, the bill provides a data-driven benchmark for standardizing school closures and taking measurable actions to turn around failing schools. Critics worry that closures may disrupt communities, but trapping students in the status-quo cycle of underachieving schools is far more disruptive to students and their futures. Senate Bill 127 acknowledges that reality and rightly prioritizes student outcomes over bureaucratic inertia, and holds educators accountable to the families they serve.

Because the bill seeks to improve schools, not simply close them, it empowers underperforming districts to get help by partnering with high-performing districts or private-sector entities with a proven track record of academic and managerial success. Students, not entrenched interests, will be the ultimate beneficiaries of these efforts.

The Buckeye Institute has long advocated policies that put students first. Senate Bill 127 does that by reassuring families that chronically underperforming schools are unacceptable, and poor performance will be corrected or held accountable.

Thank you for your time and attention. I would be happy to answer any questions that the Committee might have.



About The Buckeye Institute

Founded in 1989, The Buckeye Institute is an independent research and educational institution – a think tank – whose mission is to advance free-market public policy in the states.

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