



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

**Ohio Education Association
Ohio House Primary & Secondary Education Committee
HB 214 – Opponent Testimony
October 16, 2023**

Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the Ohio House Primary & Secondary Education Committee. My name is Mark Hill. I am a middle school math teacher in Worthington City Schools and currently serve as the Secretary-Treasurer of the Ohio Education Association (OEA). On behalf of the approximately 120,000 members of the OEA, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on House Bill 214 (HB 214).

OEA opposes HB 214, which requires school districts to adopt policies setting forth expectations and standards for all professional staff members related to specific beliefs, affiliations, ideals, or principles concerning political movements, ideology, or social action. The bill further requires school districts and schools to make publicly available all policies, guidance, and training materials used for students, educators, and staff on all matters regarding specific beliefs, affiliations, ideals, or principles concerning political movements, ideology, or social action.

HB 214 would cause unnecessary distraction and confusion for educators, students, administrators, and parents by requiring vague and amorphous local censorship guidelines in Ohio's 600 plus school districts and hundreds of charter schools. A state mandated political censorship maze across Ohio's school districts and charter schools is in no one's interest, least of all students. The bill threatens to replace coherent student instruction standards with incoherent local experimentation in politically motivated censorship. Such a law would harm Ohio's public schools.

OEA notes the existence of the *Licensure Code of Professional Conduct for Ohio Educators*, which provides a unified and consistent approach to professional conduct guidance for Ohio educators. The educator code of conduct applies to any person who holds a license through the Ohio Department of Education. The code of conduct was developed by the Educator Standards Board and the State Board of Education in 2008. Updates were made and adopted on September 17, 2019. The Educator Standards Board, the State Board of Education, and the *Licensure Code of Professional Conduct for Ohio Educators* provide the appropriate venues and policy vehicle, respectively, for addressing issues surrounding the professional conduct of licensed educators in Ohio's public schools.

In closing, OEA opposes HB 214 as it contains politicized censorship policies that would create school environments based on intimidation, fear, harassment, and anxiety for educators and students. Thank you for your consideration of these concerns. I am available for any questions you or members of the committee may have.

