

CHEO LEGISLATIVE ALERT – ACTION NEEDED

Regarding Ohio State Board of Education

June 1, 2021 – from Melanie Elsey, CHEO Legislative Liaison

H.B. 298: This bill would restore the Ohio State Board of Education to a completely **ELECTED** board.

Joint Sponsors: State Representatives Adam Bird and Joseph Miller

Testimony: Sponsor testimony was provided to the Ohio House Oversight Committee at its first hearing on May 20, 2021.

Key Details:

The State Board of Education was established through a Constitutional amendment in 1953. From the beginning, Ohio lawmakers determined it would be an elected body and it remained as such until 1995. At that time, the membership of the State Board of Education (that sets the education policy for Ohio students, including those who are home educated) changed.

In 1995, there was a very contentious process to try to change the board to an all-appointed body, with the Governor making all of the appointments. After multiple attempts to get the legislation passed, Governor Voinovich reached an agreement with legislators to change to a “hybrid” board of 11 elected members plus 8 members appointed by the Governor. This is the structure we have today where almost half of this body is not accountable to Ohio citizens.

HB298 is quite simple. It restores the membership of the State Board of Education to 11 elected members and removes the appointed positions. The elected board districts would be the same as they had been for 30 years: one State Board of Education district = 3 state Senate districts.

Local school boards are critical in setting policy at the community level. The Ohio State Board of Education drives that policy. Privately educated students have governing boards, but **home education policy is completely determined by the regulations set by this state board.**

ACTION NEEDED: This is critical to protect home education in Ohio for years to come.

- 1. Find your elected Board member:** It is possible you may be asked if you know who represents your district on the State Board of Education. To find your elected member of this board, use this link or contact your county board of elections: <http://education.ohio.gov/State-Board/State-Board-Members> (If time is limited, please skip this step and simply contact your rep.)
- 2. Contact your State Representative:** Please ask him/her to support Substitute HB 298 and restore our board to a completely elected board. You can determine who represents you at this link: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov>

Additional Information:

Read the bill: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-documents?id=GA134-HB-298>
(underlined language is proposed NEW law)

Sponsor Testimony from May 20: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-committee-documents?id=GA134-HB-298>