

OFT Educational Issues Committee

2026 Resolution

1 **RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE RESTORATION OF EDUCATOR PROFESSIONALISM**
2 **AND VOICE IN OHIO STATE POLICY AND GOVERNANCE**

3 WHEREAS, the quality of public education in the State of Ohio should depend directly upon the
4 expertise, dedication, and professional judgment of its classroom educators, who possess the
5 most immediate and specialized knowledge regarding teaching, learning, and student needs;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, recent legislative actions, notably the provisions within House Bill 33 (HB 33) and
8 House Bill 96 (HB 96), have systematically eliminated or weakened the professional voice of
9 educators within key state governing bodies, evidenced by:

- 10 ● State Board of Education (SBOE): Shifting primary policy and curriculum authority from
11 the elected board to the new Department of Education and Workforce (DEW), led by a
12 governor-appointed director.
- 13 ● State Teachers Retirement System (STRS): Legislating the drastic reduction of
14 educator-elected seats in favor of politically-appointed members, thereby removing
15 democratic control from fund contributors in favor of partisan politicians' control over the
16 pension fund and negating the voices and activism of STRS members.
- 17 ● Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) and Workforce Commissions: Structuring
18 advisory bodies with a heavy focus on industry and employer needs, while failing to
19 mandate the formal, sustained inclusion of practicing K-12 teachers in decisions
20 affecting curriculum alignment and educator preparation programs; and

21 WHEREAS, treating educators as mere implementers of rigid, underfunded mandates rather
22 than as autonomous professionals undermines their capacity to exercise necessary classroom
23 judgment to differentiate instruction, manage behavioral complexities, and foster student growth
24 in dynamic learning environments; and

25 WHEREAS, this professional judgment and teacher expertise about student learning are rooted
26 in the use of formative assessment strategies; Ohio's legislative focus on high-stakes,
27 summative testing has created a system of public accountability that prioritizes a single,
28 quantifiable metric over holistic instructional insight from day-to-day teacher assessment,
29 thereby silencing educators' professional voice in shaping curriculum and assessment policy;
30 and

31 WHEREAS, this overemphasis on standardized testing has caused substantial damage in
32 schools, including but not limited to narrowing the curriculum, teaching to the test, reducing the
33 love of learning, pushing students out of school, driving educators out of the profession leading
34 to teacher shortages, and undermining school climate; and

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35 WHEREAS, the sustained erosion of professional autonomy and agency is a primary driver of
36 low morale and professional dissatisfaction, resulting in increasing rates of attrition among
37 experienced educators and creating profound challenges for the recruitment of high-quality new
38 talent into the Ohio public education system; and

39 WHEREAS, laws concerning education are best informed by those who implement them daily,
40 and the failure of the Ohio General Assembly and state agencies to require and incorporate
41 meaningful, consistent input from active teaching professionals when crafting education
42 legislation leads directly to impractical regulations and policies that are detrimental to student
43 success; therefore,

44 BE IT RESOLVED, that The Ohio Federation of Teachers formally calls upon the Ohio General
45 Assembly, the Governor, and all relevant state agencies to:

- 46 1. Recognize and Uphold Professional Expertise: Immediately cease the practice of
47 viewing educators solely as state employees and instead recognize and treat them as
48 highly skilled professionals whose expertise on pedagogy, curriculum, and classroom
49 management is indispensable to sound educational policy.
- 50 2. Restore Governance Representation: Prioritize and take legislative action to restore a
51 strong, mandated presence of active classroom educators on all state boards,
52 commissions, and advisory bodies that impact K-12 schooling, teacher certification,
53 educator retirement (STRS), and K-12/Higher Education alignment (ODHE/workforce
54 initiatives).
- 55 3. Extend Stakeholder Feedback to Include Educator Consultation: Establish a formal,
56 mandatory process requiring extensive consultation with a diverse, non-partisan panel of
57 practicing Ohio educators before any new legislation or rule regarding classroom
58 practice, curriculum, or instructional time is drafted or passed.
- 59 4. Affirm Teacher Judgment: Explicitly affirm in state policy the importance of trusting the
60 professional judgment of the teacher in determining appropriate instructional methods,
61 assessment timing, and classroom disciplinary strategies necessary for the well-being
62 and academic progress of their students; and

63 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that The Ohio Federation of Teachers officially recognizes that
64 the sustained marginalization of educator voice and professional judgment, as detailed herein,
65 contributes directly to the current crisis in teacher recruitment and retention across Ohio,
66 underscoring the critical necessity of this resolution to ensure a stable, high-quality, and
67 professionally respected public education workforce; and

68 BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the Ohio Federation of Teachers requests that copies of this
69 resolution be transmitted to the Governor of Ohio, the leadership of the Ohio General Assembly,
70 the members of the Ohio State Board of Education, the Directors of the Ohio Department of
71 Education and Workforce, and the Ohio Department of Higher Education.