



**The School District
of Greenville County**
Board of Trustees

February 15, 2019

Sen. Ross Turner, Chairman
Greenville County Legislative Delegation
301 University Ridge, Suite 2400
Greenville, SC 29601

Dear Sen. Turner:

On behalf of the members of the Board of Trustees of Greenville County Schools, I am writing you today in support of H.3255 (filed by Representatives Willis and McDaniel) and S.242 (filed by Senator Fanning) which calls on the state to disband the Education Oversight Committee (EOC).

In 2017, the Greenville County Schools Board of Trustees, along with other school boards throughout the state, passed a resolution asking the South Carolina General Assembly to disband the Education Oversight Committee.

Several of the reasons that were cited in that resolution remain relevant, they are:

- We recognize that, whenever possible, policy and oversight should be provided by locally elected leaders, not by political appointees;
- We recognize that the current make-up of the EOC contains no School Board Trustees as voting members;
- We recognize that the EOC is often in conflict with the South Carolina Superintendent of Education. Further, the Superintendent of Education is a non-voting member of the Education Oversight Committee-, subverting the work of a duly elected leader; and,
- We recognize that the EOC's role has expanded drastically since its inception. As you know, when originally established the EOC was tasked with District Report cards only. Now they include creating individual school report cards, monitoring statewide programs, making policy recommendations, and funding programs.

We are not alone in our request. The South Carolina School Boards Association (SCSBA) passed a similar resolution as part of its 2018 Advocacy position statements. The South Carolina Association of School Administrators (SCASA) has passed a resolution with similar language. Additionally, in 2018, the citizens of South Carolina rejected a ballot measure to have the South Carolina Superintendent of Education become an appointed position. Many argued that the electorate, whenever possible, should have the ability to choose its leaders,



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and voters overwhelmingly rejected the idea that these choices should be made by political appointment.

In keeping with the spirit of elected representation, we ask that the Education Oversight Committee be disbanded and its authority be returned to the Department of Education and to locally elected School Boards.

The School District of Greenville County is the 44th largest district in the nation, serving over 76,000 students with 10,000 employees. Greenville County Schools students outperform the national average on the SAT and the state average on the ACT, and the district has been recognized nationally for its work with students with special needs, as well as its efforts to ensure that gains are made with our most at-risk and vulnerable students.

We welcome the desire for accountability to our local taxpayers, the South Carolina Department of Education, and the General Assembly, and we are confident that these three groups can have their concerns addressed adequately without the confusion created by an unelected body like the Education Oversight Committee. Adding to the confusion is the potential of an additional body, as part of Speaker Lucas' work with H.3759; and its companion Senate bill S419; which would give South Carolina three oversight bodies. In a place and time when those who serve expand on reducing waste and excessive expenses you have an opportunity to make our system more efficient for our students, teachers and taxpayers.

We appreciate your service to our community, your time and consideration. Should you have any questions or would like to expand upon this please feel free to give me a call.

Sincerely,

Chuck Saylor, Chair
Greenville County Schools Board of Trustees