

---

## TESTIMONY

**Testimony To:** Senate Committee on Education

**Respectfully Submitted by:** Ted Fisher, Director of Communications and Legislative Affairs

**Subject:** **S.56: proposed PreK Summer Study Language**

**Date:** March 14, 2023

---

The Agency of Education is grateful for the opportunity to weigh in on the concept of a Prekindergarten Education Study committee that the committee is considering. We generally support the intent and structure of the Committee, with two minor reservations noted below.

We believe that taking an additional year to consider some of the policy proposals raised this session is the right approach. The committee will give us a valuable opportunity to weigh potential approaches, consider available data, and seek stakeholder input.

### Recommended Changes

The AOE has concerns about two provisions of the draft language in version 2.1, related to the report due date and the level of administrative support required.

#### Report Due Date

Draft 2.1 Sec. X (e) requires the Committee to provide its report to the General Assembly on or before November 15, 2023. This date is too early, and should be changed to December 15, 2023 at the absolute earliest. Based on AOE's significant experience with establishing and managing the work of off-session working groups and committees, we believe that this timeline is unrealistic, and in our analysis will make it more difficult for the committee to provide the thoughtful examination the General Assembly seeks. As noted in previous testimony, committees need time over the summer to get established and organize themselves, and then have a very short timeline in the fall to consider complex issues and draft final recommendations.

#### Level of Administrative and Technical Assistance

AOE is concerned with the language in subsection (d), assistance, which requires AOE to provide administrative, technical, fiscal and legal assistance to the committee. As previously noted, the AOE cannot provide a bottomless well of capacity to support the work of committees, working groups, and other one-off report products. Our staff are already engaged in mission



critical, high value work at the direction of the General Assembly, and we have very limited capacity to absorb additional work absent the provision of additional resources. AOE is uncertain what, if any, legal or technical resources may be needed by this group, but is likely unable to provide significant support if that is needed.

If the committee decides to move forward with requiring AOE to provide this assistance, Secretary French will direct his staff to assist with meeting scheduling, posting minutes and agendas, and copyediting and production of the final report, but will be unable to provide additional technical, legal or financial support, to include staffing and minuting meetings.