



Date: February 3, 2020
To: House Education Committee, Chair Doherty and Members
From: Laurie Wimmer, OEA Government Relations
RE: *HB 4140 [Students with Brain Injury – Return to School Protocols]*

On behalf of OEA's 45,000 members, it is my honor to submit this testimony in support of HB 4140, which will provide to schools and educators a voluntary tool to guide them in their efforts to accommodate students whose concussion or brain injuries may have education-setting implications.

We appreciate the sponsor's willingness to incorporate the input of a wide variety of advocates, experts, and specialists in the development of this legislation. Recognizing that students do not always have individualized education programs, specific physician instructions shared by parents with the school, or other guidance, this bill asks the Department of Education to develop a list of academic adjustments that may be advised according to the nature of the recovering student's needs.

Because the use of this form is optional, we see it as a helpful tool for education employees and parents alike. We believe that the ODE will turn to experts in the field of brain injury to create the form, identifying behavioral, cognitive, environmental, and other impacts that could be addressed in this guidance.

By supporting students' educational needs – even while still in recovery – through extended time, the wearing of protective glasses or a hat if lighting is an issue, and other adjustments, students will miss less learning time and classrooms are less likely to experience disruptions that sometimes come from behaviors associated with injury to the brain.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.