

House Education & Career Readiness Committee

House Bill 176: Opponent Testimony

October 24, 2017

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Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the House Education and Career Readiness Committee, my name is Michele Pomerantz, Policy and Labor Liaison for the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD). I appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony in regards to House Bill 176.

I am sharing our opposition to H.B. 176 which would make sweeping changes to Ohio's academic content standards and impact the significant investments our district has made regarding the implementation of Ohio's Learning Standards.

In 2012, we put new rules in place for CMSD that we believed could improve our chances of winning with the Cleveland Plan (H.B. 525). We have seen evidence that the changed conditions we are creating are taking effect and increasing student success but these meaningful gains will have little impact if our students aren't measured with the quality and rigor that are evident in today's Ohio's Learning Standards. In 2010 our district began training all primary school teachers to understand and build curriculum around the standards, and with the help of grants, all of our educators received training in lesson preparation and assessments. We have risen to the challenge of aligning our district resources with higher standards of education by investing millions of dollars, time training our staff and working with parents and students to educate them on these standards.

Ohio's Learning Standards are the baseline by which we determine if our school reform measures are successful. Without them, the progress our students, community and stakeholders have shown will be for naught, and a plan that the nation looks at for direction will become uncertain – for this reason we ask you to support Ohio's Learning Standards and its implementation.

We also strongly oppose the proposal to eliminate the Resident Educator Summative Assessment (RESA). As CMSD continues to reform our schools to better serve students and families, programs like RESA have helped to shape our workforce to generate a cadre of educators who are far more prepared than their predecessors. A student's teacher is the most influential indicator determining a scholar's success. At a time in Ohio when job training and college preparedness are critical to keeping our state competitive, quality educators who can adapt, reflect and are resilient are needed more than ever. In 2016-17 alone, CMSD had 526 Resident Educators, all who received regular coaching and feedback through the Resident Educator program. We know that comprehensive, regular feedback and support is critical for teachers to be successful, and ensuring that our large number of new teachers who receive this support has been critical to CMSD's success.

I want to thank you for your time considering this testimony and will make myself available for any questions.