

N.R, I.G, and N.H
Testimony Submitted to the House Finance Transportation Subcommittee
HB 49: FY18-19 Budget Bill
March 21, 2017

Chair McColley, Vice Chair Reece, and members of the House Finance Transportation Subcommittee, thank you for allowing us to testify today on HB 49.

My name is N.R and these are my fellow students, N.H. and I.G. We are sophomores at the Graham School. Graham has a very diverse student population, where the teachers are dedicated to helping us succeed. We are here today to discuss the importance of data collection in Ohio's juvenile courts.

Students cannot receive the help that they need if their story and experience remains undocumented. Out of the potentially 90,000 kids that are in the Ohio juvenile court system, we only have data on about 5% of them. That is thousands of kids that go unnoticed and need help. They need their voices to be heard and appropriate resources and policies to help them.

N.H: I have been experiencing mental health illness for two years now. School is sometimes a challenge, but I do my best to stay on task with the help of my teachers and counselor. While my experience is unique to me, I recognize that a lot of my peers have similar challenges, especially those in the juvenile court system. When mental health goes untreated it becomes worse. Youth in the juvenile court system deserve to have a chance to get the help and resources that they need to heal. Data collection is important to connect students to the services that they require to stay in school and out of juvenile court.

I.G: In conclusion, the data collection in Ohio juvenile courts is important so that court-involved youth can be redirected onto a path of success. If courts do not have all the data they cannot put the rest of the puzzle together, therefore we cannot help the whole child. We need consistent data to get students the services that they need to break the cycle. Thank you again Chair McColley, Vice Chair Reece, and members of the House Finance Transportation Subcommittee for allowing us to testify today.