



HB 129 Testimony
State and Local Government Committee
State Representative Kent Smith, 8th District
March 28, 2017

Chairperson Anielski, Vice Chairperson Hambley, Ranking Member Bischoff, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to explain why, I believe, sending Governor Kasich back to school may result in better public policy outcomes for our kids.

As was mentioned by my cosponsor, House Bill 129 would require the Governor to complete a forty-hour externship of five eight-hour days during the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years. The Governor would spend time alongside classroom instructors, food service professionals, and / or custodial and maintenance staff in public schools rated A through F – 8 hours in each category. Following his externship, he would write a report to the leadership of both chambers entitled, "How to Make All Ohio Schools A-Rated Institutions".

Before sharing some of the support that has been vocalized for this proposal, I think it is important to remind ourselves where the State of Ohio was when Governor Kasich took office in January 2011.

The annual Education Week, Quality Counts report examines all 50 states on over 30 different public education categories. According to the 2017 Quality Counts report, Ohio's education system was rated 22nd best in the country. Ohio was 5th when Kasich became Governor. No state in the top 5 in 2010 has fallen further in the past seven years than 14th – except Ohio.

Representative Kelly and I have served in local government before joining the Ohio General Assembly. The majority of this committee, has served in local or county government before joining the Ohio General Assembly. Governor Kasich does not have that experience and therefore, I believe he would be well served to spend 40 hours in a public school setting.

The Ohioans who have contacted my office about the GET REALS Act seem to agree (quoting from actual emails sent to the Rep08 email address – last names redacted). For example:

Rebecca M. of Alliance wrote, "Representative Smith – I think your plan for having Governor Kasich serve an externship so he will really understand what's going on in Ohio's schools is inspired."

David C. of Minerva wrote, "The insights the governor would gain from such a visit would be so enlightening to him about the joys and the struggles of teaching in public schools. It would also educate him on the true dedication of Ohio's public school teachers and the challenges they face at the whim of legislators' actions."

Linda R. of Toledo wrote, "He (The Gov.) needs the experience to better understand the heroic efforts of our teachers who do so much with so little state funding."

Julie R. of East Rochester wrote, "I read with great interest your proposal to require the Governor to spend 40 hours in a school. I think that is a wonderful idea."

Lynn T of Delaware wrote, "Recently I read about your proposed bill requiring Governor Kasich to serve 40-hour externship in public schools throughout Ohio. If this bill would pass, I want to be his first location. ... I 100% support this proposal to help our Governor become better in touch with our public school system by seeing / experiencing the true reality of the day to day operation of educating our young people in Ohio."

In an email sent to Gov. Kasich that was copied to my office, Joanne K. of Canton wrote, "Please encourage your colleagues to attend full day sessions of public school at all grade levels and in all economic levels in Ohio. Let them see what both inner city and rural school children do to develop their skills. They may be surprised to learn that in some rural areas of Ohio, on freezing days, plumbing may include an outhouse."

Sabrina D. of Minerva wrote, "I have taught and worked for school districts where the kids come from the worst of homes - abuse, neglect, parents who are so high on drugs that kids must bathe their little siblings and clear the empty liquor bottles off the kitchen table so they can sit down for the breakfast they get for themselves. Our students are more than a test score - they are brave heroes battling more challenges than ever before."

Mark C. of Union wrote, "As a teacher with 28 years educating Ohio's children, I applaud you and Representative Kelly. I'm sure you now have every teacher in Ohio on your side."

Madame Chair, and members of the committee. I believe House Bill 129 has broad based support across our state and my cosponsor and I would welcome any questions at this time.

Thank you for your attention.