

	<p style="text-align: center;">EDUCATION COMMITTEE</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Witness Form</p>

Today's Date 12/5/17

Name: Erin Shakour

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Organization Representing: CMSD Master Teacher, K-1

Testifying on Bill Number: SB 216

Testimony: Verbal Written Both

Testifying As: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist? Yes No

Special Requests: * Need to testify as early
as possible please.

Opponent Testimony of Erin Shakour, Kindergarten Teacher, Cleveland
Metropolitan School District
Senate Bill 216
Senate Education Committee
December 6, 2017

Chairwoman Lehner, Ranking Member Sykes, and member of the Senate Education Committee. Hello, my name is Erin Shakour and I am a kindergarten teacher for the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. This August, I started my thirteenth year of teaching. The majority of my teaching experiences have been in either Kindergarten or first grade classrooms. I am here today to speak on behalf of keeping the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, or as many know it to be, the KRA, in place.

For the last four years the KRA has been an important tool to provide both myself and my district with consistent, standardized instructional information immediately at the start of the school year. This information is extremely valuable because it allows me to gain an understanding of my students' knowledge base in early Literacy and Math skills while serving as a starting point to plan instruction.

The KRA is developmentally appropriate and elicits real data from the students in an appropriate way. If districts and schools choose an alternate assessment, we will not be measuring consistent results and many schools will use assessments that are not appropriate for 5 year olds. Many variables such as student ability to manipulate a mouse rather than really assessing language knowledge and acquisition may skew the results.

Many of my students are entering a school setting for the first time. When I administer the literacy and math sections during the phase-in days, it allows me to create relationships and establish rapport with them. The students are excited to have 1 on 1 time with me in their new classroom and I get a feel for their personalities. In addition, the KRA helps establish communication with parents as a means to report student progress. The first question I get from parents is "How did they do?" I am able to give immediate personalized feedback about their performance and any observations made. It serves as a natural bridge for school to home supports. Many parents welcome ideas and strategies they can use to support or enrich their children outside of the instructional day.

Changes to the KRA should serve as an option to be explored. If changes need to be made, I recommend that the assessment be altered shortening the observation section. Observation and anecdotal records are an everyday natural occurrence in a kindergarten classroom on an as needed basis. However, recording 21 observations for 25 or more individual students and inputting them into a portal is time consuming. If

observations could be reduced to the essential items, that would make this part of the assessment more effective.

Another change that would be beneficial would include changes to the testing window. The Literacy and Math portions should be administered prior to the students starting the school year. The data does not lend itself to be useful if you are only able to test a couple students a week and complete testing at the end of October. In my experience, I was fortunate enough to be in a building where my principal allowed me to administer the literacy and math sections of KRA during the 2 phase-in days. I set up 30 minute appointments in the weeks before school starting to ensure that everyone was scheduled a time slot. Not all schools do it this way, and the frustrations that some teachers, especially newer teachers, have voiced is time. Realistically, many teachers do not have the time to get 25 or more students individually tested and observations for each child recorded while managing and teaching a classroom. The KRA then becomes a matter of compliance (get it done to be done) rather than a tool to help form instruction. Changing to another assessment, after only 4 years of implementation would be disruptive and discouraging for teachers.

In conclusion, I find the bulk of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment to be beneficial. It is standardized and developmentally appropriate. The data collected from the literacy and math sections provide a baseline to design instruction and communicate with families. Teachers have received training and incorporated this assessment into their beginning of the year schedules. Improvements like testing items and testing window should be made so that money invested in teacher training and on materials are not wasted. Discontinuing this measure, especially after only 4 years is not the appropriate action.