

**Ohio House Education Committee**

**November 19, 2019**

**House Bill 322 – Proponent Testimony**

**Melissa Kendralla – Educator**

Good afternoon Chairman Jones, Ranking Member Robinson and members of the House Education Committee. My name is Melissa Kendralla. I live in Gahanna and I am a Career and Technical teacher at Westland High School in South-Western City School District.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB 322. Eliminating the Resident Educator Summative Assessment (RESA) is a positive move for the well-being of teachers and most importantly the students.

First, the RESA consumes time and resources that would be far better spent planning, assessing and collaborating for the success of our students. The RESA has been a distraction from the most important form of support for early career educators, which is high-quality mentoring.

Second, teachers do not see the value of the RESA. It is not viewed as relevant to improving their practice or as a measure of their true teaching ability. The truth about RESA is that it really only assesses their video, editing, and short form writing/vocabulary skills. A twenty minute video and limited text response in no way represents all that we do as educators, nor should it be used to determine the complete value or ability of what a good teacher should be in the classroom.

Another significant shortcoming of the RESA is the lack of meaningful feedback. Educators receive scores – not explanations. Furthermore, the response time of the limited pass-fail feedback takes months. Every educator should know the importance of timely feedback. If a failing score is received, Resident Educators can resubmit up to two more times and again await word from the anonymous outside entity that determines whether a teacher will keep their teaching license.

Educators are very busy and face a multitude of demands. Early career educators should be supported with high-quality mentoring, not distracted from their students with a time-consuming “jump-through-hoop” requirement like the RESA. This is especially true when considering that these individuals have completed education preparation programs and already passed multiple state tests for licensure. It is unnecessary and wasteful to require another layer of bureaucracy like the RESA in order to keep their hard-earned license.

HB 322 would help fix this by eliminating the RESA, bringing more focus to the importance of high-quality mentoring programs and hopefully more extensive training for mentors.

Extensive research indicates that a mentor in the first two years of any profession (but specifically teaching) is a huge indicator in effectiveness and retention in the profession. (FN 1) I support the two-year Resident Educator program in HB 322 that is focused on mentoring and professional development. I recommend that the Resident Educator license be valid for two years instead of four years, with opportunities to extend or renew the license if necessary. Upon completion of the Resident Educator program, an educator can then apply for a Professional Educator License under rules adopted by the State Board of Education.

I became a teacher leader by facilitating professional development, collaborating with colleagues on curriculum, serving on the steering committee in my buildings, and mentoring new teachers. I have learned first-hand the positive impact of mentoring for early career educators. As a mentor, I discovered another meaningful role in truly making a difference.

It is encouraging that ODE's strategic plan "Each Child Our Future" lists Strategy #1 as: Increase the supply of highly effective teachers and leaders and provide supports to ensure they are effective or highly effective." (FN 2) HB 322 does this by reestablishing mentoring as the critical support needed to strengthen early career educators. HB 322 puts Ohio on the right track.

In closing, I believe the RESA needs to be eliminated so that we can increase time and resources available for strong mentor programs and more mentor training.

Teachers need quality mentors and mentors need quality training. But the RESA is just another test. In contrast, HB 322 can help provide for the true needs of early career educators and strengthen their service to students.

Thank you again for this opportunity to speak with you today. I am available for any questions.

## Notes:

### Mentors Need Training

To be effective, mentoring programs need focus and structure. Diane Kyle, Gayle Moore, and Judy Sanders (1999) note that prospective mentors should participate in professional development to learn about the mentoring process and what is expected of them before assuming their duties. Their research also shows that mentor teachers need support and the opportunity to discuss ideas, problems, and solutions with other mentor teachers.

Appropriate training for the mentor's expanded teaching role improves the quality of a mentoring program. ... This finding demonstrates that the mere presence of a mentor is not enough; the mentor's knowledge of how to support new teachers and skill at providing guidance are also crucial.<sup>1</sup>

Growing and attracting excellent candidates: In conjunction with key educator stakeholder groups, Ohio and its partners can take steps to attract more individuals to the teaching profession. Low morale, limited compensation and other issues have discouraged individuals from becoming teachers. At the same time, many educators are motivated and impassioned by positively touching the lives of children, and jobs in education are among the most stable in the economy<sup>2</sup>

1 May 2001 | Volume **58** | Number **8 Who Is Teaching Our Children?** Pages 85-86  
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/may01/vol58/num08/The-Benefits-of-Mentoring.aspx>

2 Each Child, Our Future, Ohio's Strategic Plan for Education: 2019-2024, p.14 - 15  
<https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/About/Ohios-Strategic-Plan-for-Education/Final-Strategic-Plan-Board-Approved.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US>