

Chairman Jones, Vice Chair Manchester, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in opposition to House Bill 322.

My name is Mary Wentz. I am a retired school administrator and former 6-8 math/science/language arts teacher and K-12 teacher of gifted students. I have worked within 3 school districts and worked as an outside consultant in 4 other districts. For the past several years, I have worked as a RESA assessor.

I write to you today in support of the RESA program as I believe it is a fair, unbiased, and equitable method to mentor and evaluate teachers.

You might notice that I mentioned unbiased. Throughout my years as a school administrator, I have seen and have heard of many teachers that were given great evaluations by principals when the teacher did not deserve high scores. I have heard principals tell me that the teacher that they scored high was a “friend” of a board member, the daughter of a former administrator, a teacher that is really a “nice” person, or even because we need them as a coach. This is why we need the RESA.

The RESA process eliminates the inherent bias of the principals, which can lead to unfairly positive or negative evaluations of teachers. The RESA uses a pool of assessors who are Ohio educators, have a minimum of 10 years of teaching experience, and understand the Ohio Learning Standards. Each year, RESA assessors go through a rigorous training program and must pass a certification test in order to score the candidates.

All RESA candidates are scored fairly using a standardized rubric. There is no bias. Assessors only consider the teacher’s ability to demonstrate the Ohio Standards for the Teaching Profession, not their connection to a board member or their ability to fill a coaching position. When a teacher passes the RESA, the school and, more importantly, the students and their parents are assured that the teacher is able to demonstrate the Ohio Standards for the Teaching Profession.

I have reviewed the testimony that has already been submitted by proponents of the bill and would like to address a few points:

1. The RESA evaluation has changed and adapted in response to suggestions over the last several years. It DOES give comprehensive feedback to the teachers, not just a pass or not pass score. This feedback can be used by the teacher to improve their teaching.
2. RESA assessors strictly protect student and parent private information and in the past may have been too restrictive on what was allowed in a candidate’s submission. Currently and during the past couple school years, a student name on a jersey or names spoken by teachers are not a reason to refuse the submission.
3. The RESA process has evolved over the years. In the past the submission was quite lengthy and took a considerable amount of time to complete. However, the most recent submissions involve a 20-minute video that the teacher decides to

submit online with answers to questions that help the teacher self-evaluate their submission. Please let me emphasize that teachers select their submission materials. Throughout the process teachers are encouraged to record many lessons and submit the one that they think is their best. It is my strong belief that watching a video of yourself teaching and reflecting upon that lesson is an outstanding method to self-evaluate. Then to send that lesson to an assessor that has been an Ohio educator for at least 10 years, has been trained and certified on the RESA program, and who supplies comprehensive feedback is a great way to improve one's teaching.

4. The mentoring portion of the RESA program is extremely important and should be a valuable resource for new teachers. Mentors should be helping teachers on day-by-day situations, providing teachers with examples of good teaching, and providing guidance when teachers have questions. Teachers are provided with helpful resources, which have significantly improved over the years, to assist them in completing the RESA. The RESA handbook clearly outlines what a submission should contain, includes the criteria that will be used for evaluation, and clear instructions on how to submit the video and written responses. Furthermore, there is a help desk that candidates can contact to ask questions about the RESA submissions.
5. Finally, I will tell you that I have worked as a RESA assessor for several years. I have seen some incredible teachers via videos. Teachers that engage and make students want to learn. Teachers that will make a difference in the lives of their students. I have also seen some teachers that lack the ability to engage the students, maintain discipline in their classroom, are unable to connect their lesson to the Ohio Standards, nor able to reflect on their own lesson. Each time I see one of these submissions, I ask myself "Is this really what the teacher thought was their best teaching?" These are teachers that need additional support before they advance to a professional license. Our students deserve better.

I ask that you maintain the RESA and not pass HB 322.

Thank you,
Mary Wentz