

House Education Primary and Secondary Education Committee
HB 322 – Opponent Written Testimony
May 20, 2020

Jill Madonia, Retired HS Math Teacher and District Instructional Specialist, and current RESA Mentor, Akron Public Schools; Current part-time tutor, Archbishop Hoban High School (under Auxiliary Services of APS); Multi-year RESA Assessor.

Chairman Jones, Ranking Member Robinson and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide my testimony in opposition to HB 322.

Before writing this testimony, I took time to review the statements of those who testified last week in favor of HB 322. I was confused. Most of what I read referred to alleged distraction from a desired focus on teaching practices, professional development and mentoring and to personal fear. However, in my experience, the RESA program, when implemented as intended, is or should be something very different from those characterizations.

First, RESA is all about mentoring and professional development. Yes, it's structured: the goal of RESA mentoring is to help developing teachers strive toward a practice that embodies the Ohio Standards for the Teaching Profession. This goal is approached through observation, discussion, reflection and constructive feedback, and the work is shared in an environment of understanding and support. Professional development and mentoring in years one and two focus on various elements of teaching with mentor observations providing *formative* assessments meant to inform strategies for improvement.

The fear factor. Although the mentoring continues in year three to help the candidate prepare for the RESA - the *summative* assessment – it is the assessment that seems to be the focus of attack. Yes, it's true that early in the program the RESA was perhaps unnecessarily demanding and time consuming. That is no longer the case, and it hasn't been for several years. Submitting one 20-minute video along with a description of the lesson objectives, standards, assessment methods and plans for remediation should not be considered unreasonable. Even if the lesson doesn't go as hoped, the teacher's recognition of what was less than desired along with a plan for making improvements can show an acceptable level of professionalism and competence. There is nothing here to be feared; nor is there anything here that would necessarily prevent a commitment to other involvement in school activities or to continued professional development.

Why should this program of mentoring and professional development change? If the reason is only to transfer the responsibility to local districts and schools, please consider that the resulting burden on local districts to develop their own programs would be an unnecessary, less accountable and perhaps more costly requirement. And, in the current situation of unknowns due to COVID 19, making an unnecessary change now would present a seemingly reckless drain on the resources of our schools as they try to adjust to a new "normal".

Finally, I have often thought that, had this program been in place when I was new to the profession, I would have been a much better teacher, much sooner. Ah, the perspective that comes with time and experience!

I urge you to please oppose HB 322 which seems to impose unnecessary change to a worthy program of teacher development and which threatens to lower the standards for teacher licensing.