

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.

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

During my 8 years as an administrator, I served as both a member (3 years) and chair (5 years) of the Local Professional Development Committee (LPDC). I find the proposal that the LPDC be charged with developing and overseeing mentorship programs for new teachers to be concerning. Although as chair I adhered strictly to the rules and regulations of the LPDC, I found that not all LPDC committees across the state were as strict with approval for professional development. I have seen professional development plans approved from other districts that allowed football coaching clinics, reading books at home with no accountability as to the content, watching a blockbuster movie at a theater, and even a real estate seminar to be used as professional development for teaching. Often the incoming teachers were quite upset when our committee didn't allow these activities to qualify for their professional teaching development plan. Developing and managing a high-quality mentorship program for our new teachers takes a significant amount of time and expertise, and I have doubts that LPDCs across Ohio are in a position to accomplish this. Yes, some will take the task very seriously, but others will simply view it as a compliance task. Ensuring new teachers receive the necessary support and professional development is too important to be given to a committee that simply wants to check the boxes, sign the forms, and move teachers along. Our students deserve better.

I find the testimony that has already been submitted faulty in some cases 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 teachers comprehensive feedback to the teachers, not just a pass or no 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. Currently, 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 current RESA involves a teacher selected 20 minute video along with self-evaluation questions. Please let me repeat. The teachers select their submissions. Throughout the process teachers are encouraged to record many lessons and submit the one that they think is their best. It is my belief that watching a video of yourself teaching and reflecting upon that lesson is an outstanding method to self-

evaluate and improve as a teacher. 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 feedback as to the scores is indeed a great way to improve one's teaching.

4. The mentoring portion of the Resident Educator program is extremely important and should be a valuable resource for new teachers. If the time they spend with mentors is simply used to complete the submission, then the mentors are failing them. The RESA handbook clearly outlines what a submission should contain, includes the rubric that will be used for evaluation, and clear instructions on how to submit the video and text portions. Furthermore, there is a toll-free number that candidates can use to ask questions about the RESA submissions. Mentors should be helping teachers on day by day situations, providing teachers with examples of good teaching, and providing guidance when teachers have questions.

I ask that you continue to support the Resident Educator Program and the RESA and not pass HB 322. Thank you for allowing me to provide written testimony.

Thank you,
Mary Wentz