

March 29, 2017

Belinda Costin
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Ohio House of Representatives
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Representatives,

The legislation addressing the requirement of instruction of cursive handwriting (H.B. # 58) is very important to me because I am a former Second Grade teacher and Principal as well as a current Educational Consultant and Childcare (Infants through School Agers) Supervisor. This issue directly impacts students with whom I work and have worked.

Research shows that learning to write in cursive improves brain development in the areas of language, working memory, and cognition. Cursive handwriting stimulates the brain's left and right hemispheres in a way that printing, texting, and typing do not. Research also shows that significantly more areas of the brain are utilized with cursive writing because strokes are sequential, letters are connected, and the mid-line of the body is crossed in a consistent manner.

I value the instruction of cursive handwriting to such a high degree that I made sure it was being taught in my classrooms at all three schools at which I was the Principal which is as recent as academic year 2015-2016. As a Second Grade teacher, we spent at least twenty minutes a day/four times a week teaching the discipline of cursive handwriting. I saw children's self-esteem flourish because they perceived with their own eyes the accomplishments they achieved for their effort and hard work. Change in their posture was evident as well! Their desire to take pride in their ability to communicate carefully was stated to me by parents throughout the years. Practicing cursive handwriting assisted some of my students to learn to spell their vocabulary words correctly.

In all my years of teaching cursive handwriting, I had only one child NOT succeed in learning cursive and that was because I could only teach him once a week. The structure, the discipline, the practice of the movements, the performance of sequential ordering of strokes, the breakdown of the formation of the letters, and the crossing of the mid-line of their body all contributed to assisting my students to succeed in writing as well as growing in self-regulation (self-control), self-esteem, and concentration. What else today motivates and teaches children the same skill sets as cursive handwriting?

It may look like a waste of twenty minutes a day to you, but it gives children abilities that will follow them along the path of their academic lives. Unless children have access to high quality sports or art education in their district, where do they consistently practice crossing the mid-line of their body or learn and practice a physical discipline that shows improvement over time that leads to a feeling of accomplishment and increased self-esteem?

Yes, without learning cursive handwriting, generations to come will not be able to read historical documents in their original form. Yes, already young people who never learned cursive think that I am "writing in a foreign language." Yes, college applicants no longer "sign" their names on their applications; they print them. For me, as an educator, these are all sad results of the decision not to mandate the teaching of cursive handwriting in our state. But, what saddens me more: the atrophy of specific brain development.

Thank you for your consideration of my viewpoint on this matter. I believe it is an important issue, and would like to see the legislation pass to ensure effective educational services for all students in Ohio.

Sincerely,



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