



Catholic Conference of Ohio

Dec. 6, 2017
Senate Education Committee
SB 216
Interested Party

Introduction

Good afternoon Chair Lehner, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Sykes and Committee Members. My name is Larry Keough. I am the associate director at the Catholic Conference of Ohio and legislative advocate for Catholic schools.

KRA

You might be asking why the Conference is presenting testimony for a public-school bill, SB 216. Our comments are as an interested party related to the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment.

We do not want the KRA to be repealed. We collaborated with the Department of Education to advocate for Catholic and other chartered nonpublic kindergarten programs to administer the KRA on a permissive basis.

Catholic kindergarten teachers are preparing to be trained in the KRA this spring and to administer the KRA next fall.

Benefits of the KRA

The KRA process, driven by teacher observation up to six weeks, is beneficial for several reasons, including but not limited to:

--The KRA is a continuation of the Early Learning Assessment to monitor students' academic performance to ensure they are on track educationally by or before third grade;

--The KRA, through teacher observation, creates a longitudinal data base that serves as a diagnostic tool to determine students' academic strengths and weaknesses;

--Based on the results of the KRA, instruction can be tailored to the individual learner to transform weaknesses into academic strengths.

There were comments before this committee a few weeks ago that the KRA process is too long.

This was surprising in light of comments in recent years that high stakes testing within a compressed time line is unfair because it may not be representative of the student's actual academic ability due to the student feeling under the weather or lack of focus due to family conflict.

But on the KRA, teachers can determine an accurate profile of the students academically over several weeks.

Incremental Progress in recent years:

As Sue Koverman, manager, Early Education & Extended Learning in the Archdioceses of Cincinnati stated in her written testimony, there has been much progress in recent years. Our programs have been invited to participate Step Up to Quality rating process. The ODE Early Childhood Expansion Grant allowed our programs to participate and in doing so, to register for Step Up to Quality and be trained in the Early Learning Assessment.

The KRA is the latest opportunity in early learning to be afforded to parochial schools and their families.

At this time, I would be pleased to answer any questions. Thank you.