One of my favorite parts about the teaching profession is collaboration with my colleagues, both young and seasoned. Sharing ideas makes us better teachers; we learn how to best challenge and motivate our students. I have been a mentor for our district for 15 years, navigating Praxis and now RESA.

South-Western City Schools has always had a supportive mentoring program, focused on building supportive relationships. Mentors are well-trained, having been required to attend a five-day leadership training for certification. I’ve always enjoyed being a mentor. It is natural for me to reach out to someone who needs help. The SWCS PAL program has always emphasized the importance of building a trusting relationship in which the mentee feels comfortable sharing his or her biggest struggles.

First year teachers are faced with many challenges: managing paperwork, understanding each student’s strengths and weaknesses, planning engaging lessons, talking to parents, finding resources, and navigating a new workplace, new colleagues and on average 130 students. The RESA program adds another layer to the stress and workload of our novice teachers. The main focus for me, as a mentor, has been to make sure my mentees can successfully navigate the paperwork necessary for the first year of the program as well as begin to collect evidence to submit for the assessment. Instead of being driven by the needs of the first year teacher, the interactions were driven by the requirements of the program. The paperwork and tasks in the third year are overwhelming. Not only are our resident educators required to perform all of their teacher tasks, but they must navigate endless paperwork and submit assessments that are redundant and time consuming.

Is the goal of RESA to ensure we are employing high-quality teachers? Ohio’s OTES evaluation is aligned with the standards for the teaching profession and is also designed to grow high-quality teachers. Resident educators are required to complete both assessment programs. I would suggest saving money and time by eliminating or revising RESA to more closely resemble OTES. More importantly, we need to support our new teachers, not add new burdens to their already demanding workloads. It saddens me to see so many of our eager, bright-eyed, energetic new teachers become weary, cynical and ready to leave the profession.

Thank you for your time and attention to this issue.