



Finance – Primary and Secondary  
Education  
SUBCOMMITTEE

Witness Form

Today's Date 05/22/17

Name: Stacy Garrison

Address: 6765 State Route 139  
Jackson, OH 45640

Telephone: 740-418-3931

Organization Representing: **Self**

Testifying on Bill Number: **H.B. 49**

Testimony: ☐ Verbal ☒ Written ☐ Both

Testifying As: ☐ Proponent ☐ Opponent ☒ Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Special Requests: N/A

Good morning/afternoon! My name is Stacy Garrison, and I am currently in the resident educator program.

Let me start off by telling you a little about my educational background. I graduated from college with my associate's degree in Communications and my bachelor's in Adolescent Young Adult Integrated Language Arts in 2010. I worked the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years as an English Language Arts tutor at a local middle school. I worked from September to May five days a week with students classified as having a learning disability or being at-risk. If I had been hired full-time right out of college, I would not have had to complete the RESA. I would have completed the Praxis 3 exam which is what I had been prepared for during the entirety of my college career. However, I was not fortunate enough to gain full-time employment until the 2012-2013 school year. This is my fifth year as a full-time educator. During this time, I received my master's degree in Educational Leadership in 2015. I have seven years of college coursework in education. I have been evaluated every year of my employment for OTES and received a skilled rating on every evaluation. Personally, I feel that should be enough to qualify me for a professional license.

I am part of the second cohort to go through the resident educator program. I am currently awaiting the results from my third attempt on two tasks. In case you are not aware, this means if I do not pass on this attempt, I will be forced to complete a remedial year and take another college course. Do you believe someone with seven years of college coursework and seven years of experience in a public school needs to take a remedial class if their performance in the classroom has proven to be enough for their administration and school board?

Since I was part of the second group to go through, the program was being built as we completed it. We had no foresight of what the assessment would look like, no preparation other than jumping in and completing the random tasks at hand. The first two cohorts had to complete five tasks. After the second year of the assessment, the fifth task was deleted from the program. However, if we did not pass the fifth task, we still had to complete it even though the following cohorts wouldn't have to. I'm not sure how that's fair, but thankfully, that wasn't a task I struggled with. This is just one example of the continuous changes the program has gone through and the inequality of the expectations for each cohort.

I was told at a meeting in September 2015 by our local ESC that we would have as many attempts as we needed. It wasn't until we received our results in June 2016, that I found out that was not the case-we actually only had three attempts. I was told by someone who is employed by Educopia that the plan was always for three attempts, but I had put faith in my ESC that they knew the information to relay to us. Each of my attempts was different from the others. The first attempt was structured completely different than the second and third. I also had minimal, if any, resources for my first and second

attempts. Now, there are multitudes of resources including webinars and examples for those completing the assessment. Again, I was not offered those same opportunities for my beginning attempts, or they may have turned out differently. My first attempt scores were so close to passing, it is sickening. I'm not sure if you are aware, but we receive minimal feedback and have no idea how our score is calculated. It's a mystery.

I have seen where possible revisions for next year include shortening and simplifying forms. Instead of our lesson cycles being two separate tasks, they will be one. I passed one of my lesson cycles on the first try but not the other; I only missed by four points. What could I have done to receive those four extra points? I have no clue because we don't have any idea how the assessment is graded. I'm curious what would be said to me if I didn't pass the video cycle task for the current school year when it is changing and I have already passed one? However, if I do not pass this third attempt, I will not be able to receive my professional license even though the program has never been set in stone and has gone through several changes every year I have been involved. This is one of my major concerns-the astounding amount of inconsistencies in the program. If the program was not ready to be finalized, our professional licenses should not have been on the line, and our state should not have been paying out an outrageous amount of money that could have been used to benefit our students in other ways.

Another major area of concern I have is the actual mentoring aspect itself. I was assigned a mentor my first year who I got along with great. My second year, I got a new mentor. I did not have and still do not have a good relationship with this individual. Once we reach the year where we take the assessment, our mentors turn into "facilitators." My particular facilitator refused to answer my questions and stated that he/she could lose his/her license for any advice they would give me. However, in other local school districts, ESC consultants were helping resident educators plan their lessons for recording. They were also revising and editing submissions in order to help the RE's pass their tasks. I'm aware that this is an assessment so someone else completing my work is not what I expected, but what's the point in the program if we receive minimal feedback from the assessment and up until that point, and our facilitators aren't helping us become better educators? My colleagues who are not involved at all in the resident educator program helped me grow more as an educator than the RESA ever could have.

Our state funding could be spent in much better ways. Why do we not have enough faith in our school districts to decide whether or not we deserve to advance to a professional license? Isn't that the point of OTES? Our administrators are trained to thoroughly evaluate us. Instead, I'm sending my 200 word answers to someone who isn't allowed to know that I work in one of the poorest counties in the state of Ohio and doesn't really know much about my students for them to decide my eligibility for a professional teaching license. I'd also like to point out that new teachers are jumping through the Resident Educator and OTES hoops at the same time. This also brings to question, is a college education, passing of the Praxis exams, and student teaching not enough to prove that we are worthy of being

educators? Why do we not have faith in our colleges to prepare individuals to be educators or our school administration and school boards to decide which teachers are qualified?

The inconsistencies in mentoring, facilitating, and the assessment themselves have been enough to raise concern about the program. We are spending \$5 million a year when teachers have already jumped through so many hoops. It would be different if this was a program that actually helped teachers improve. Instead, I spent close to 100 hours of my time this year completing two tasks and combing through them over and over in an attempt to get the best score possible. The closer I get to finding out my scores on June 1, which is almost a six month wait from submission, the more I doubt myself and the work I did. Perhaps if I had received timely and detailed feedback on my first attempt, I wouldn't be in the situation I am today. I was told by an Educopia employee that we don't receive feedback because there would be evaluators who would be very detailed and others who would not be detailed enough. However, when I expressed concern about the inconsistency of the grading across the state, I was assured that each evaluator is put through extensive training to ensure there is no bias. I'm not really quite sure how that isn't contradictory. If we are confident all evaluators grade equally, how can we not be sure that each would provide adequate feedback to help new teachers grow as educators?

Please help new teachers feel welcome and comfortable in education rather than wasting money on a program that doesn't really help our students or teachers at all. It feels like we are trying to figure out the solution to an ever-changing puzzle. Please get rid of the Resident Educator Summative Assessment and allow our local school districts to make a decision as to whether or not a teacher is worthy of his/her professional license. I can assure you my handful of 200 word answers and 15 minutes of video are not enough to fully display my work as an educator.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my experience, thoughts, and feelings. If you have any further questions about my experience, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Stacy Garrison