

May 22, 2017

I am submitting the following as testimony for the record regarding the state's RESA program. I am completing my 19th year as an educator in public schools in Cleveland, Ohio. I am an Ohio Master Teacher with a Senior Professional Educator Comprehensive High School License, and I am rated "Accomplished" according to my district's teacher evaluation system.

As a mentor to year one Resident Educators in Cleveland for the past three years, I have found the collegial interactions to be beneficial and enjoyable. The new teachers that I have had the pleasure of mentoring are dedicated, passionate and truly care about the students and the profession. The opportunity to clarify bureaucratic processes and systems, as well as the chance to share knowledge that I have gained from experience and research, is always warmly and openly received by the mentees. The benefits are reciprocal as each year a strategy or resource that I was unaware of is brought to my attention as well.

Although there is evidence to support the benefits of peer mentoring in education, the additional unfunded mandates currently required by the state take a toll on the resident educators and on district funds. One of our district's teachers has to leave the classroom to become a "teacher on assignment" in order to coordinate all of the multiple requirements for each Resident Educator level/year. There are mandatory meetings which cost the district money to conduct, and the mentors are paid for their time and work. However, I have not seen evidence that all of the time and cost of the current Resident Educator program's structure created by the state is worth the expense.

The most noticeable negative impact that the current Resident Educator (RE) program has is on the Resident Educators. The first years of teaching, like many other high stress jobs, brings a tremendous overload of work and emotions, and there is an enormous deficiency of time. The fact that the RE program includes an unnecessary amount of repetition because it aligns with our teacher evaluation system, is not lost on anyone involved with the program. It is as if their first years of teaching in Ohio become an RE's instant introduction to the disconnected demands and useless paperwork that the state places on educators, which have done nothing to improve teaching or learning in our state according to all credible and unbiased research to date.

New and seasoned teachers are overwhelmed in underfunded schools and overcrowded classrooms, while those outside of education demand that school buildings be the places that solve all of the problems society has created, and continues to maintain. Placing burdensome and repetitive paperwork upon new teachers is not going to slow down the fifty percent of new teachers who leave within the first five years. Charging new teachers more to maintain their credentials (like the RE program does) while paying them less and reducing their benefits is not going to attract highly qualified and skilled individuals to maintain our common public schools. It is my sincere hope that legislators and those with the power to make a difference in our current education system, take this opportunity to utilize not only the vast amount of research available,

but also conjure up enough courage and common sense to make decisions that will be fair for teachers, but more importantly, will ultimately benefit the students in our care.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my experiences and for your time and considerations.

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