

May 20, 2020

Chairman Jones, Vice Chair Manchester, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in opposition to House Bill 322.

My name is Todd Stuart, and I am the Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development at Nordon Hills City Schools (Summit County), wherein I coordinate the Resident Educator Program. I am writing today to voice my strong opposition to HB 322. This state needs now, more than ever, a **consistent** program for beginning teachers that provides a comprehensive, multi-year induction program that guides and supports novice teachers over time, and moves them more deeply into the process of being an effective teacher. We have that program in place, and it is called the Resident Educator program of Ohio.

The RESA ensures teachers complete the Resident Educator Program with integrity and are able to demonstrate the Ohio Standards for the Teaching Profession before they advance to a professional license. Also, the RESA encourages district leaders to support beginning teachers and their Resident Educator Programs. Ohio's current Resident Educator Program provides continuity between districts and maintains consistent expectations for all beginning teachers. As much as I am in favor of local control, I do not feel the same way regarding a comprehensive support program for beginning teachers. By giving control to local LPDCs, the support for novice teachers will fall on people that are already overworked, and they will not be able to give the support that the state's current Resident Educator Program provides. In order for all novice teachers to be provided a **consistent** mentoring program, it must be retained at the state level. The last thing that public education needs during a pandemic/crisis is a House Bill that will change the landscape for beginning teachers. We need to maintain consistency and build on the positive work the Resident Educator Program has provided over the last several years.

I have spent over 23 years in education, 20 of them as a building or district administrator. I have seen mentoring programs come and go, and unfortunately, this state has led the charge in being consistent in one thing... **always changing**. If you research successful programs, they are organizations that have a solid core of beliefs that are tweaked (**NOT** completely overhauled and changed) based on results and data. Unfortunately, too often in the field of education, politics and budgets completely disrupt programming because they are **always** changing the way we navigate and structure our programs. I urge you to please review and consider the data on the RESA and avoid acting on negative, personal opinions of those who are opposed because they struggled in the program. There will always be nay-sayers, but I urge you to review all of the successes, supported by data, that the Resident Educator program has brought over the last several years.

Through my interactions with our teachers involved in the Resident Educator program, they constantly thank me for the support that the district provides in their development of becoming a better educator. The core values and expectations of the Resident Educator program and RESA are what good teachers do every day in their classroom. The program promotes professional growth, collaboration, and the use of formative and summative assessments in a differentiated

teaching environment, supported by the state's learning standards. Supporting a program that has proven success for these core values is imperative. I am not confident that local LPDCs will not be able to maintain this level of support.

As a district administrator, I understand balancing budgets and prioritizing monies. I have been at the forefront of all of the recent changes to curriculum, teacher evaluations, new testing environments, and the Resident Educator program. The amount of time, research, energy and money that has gone into these changes has been overwhelming. **Educators are exhausted of the changes.** Our mentors, RESA scorers and support teams do the work because we believe that the Resident Educator program is helping our teachers become better in the classroom. Based on feedback from the field, the RESA was redesigned a couple years ago, and it now requires a lot less time to complete and provides comprehensive feedback to the teachers. Our concerns were heard and addressed in the new version of the RESA, so now is not the time to eliminate it.

The children and district residents deserve to have excellent teachers. Teachers deserve to have a continuous support system in place to provide differentiated professional development to meet their needs. Ohio already has a proven program in place and is in desperate need for your support to provide consistency and priority (funding). Please prioritize the need to keep our Resident Educator Program and the RESA in place for the future. Making a change will only cost more in the future and will set back our education system further in the development of our most precious commodity in education, excellent teachers for the children.

If you have any questions, I will be more than willing to talk to you further about the Resident Educator program at your convenience.

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