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To the Education Committee members:

My name is Melanie Sutter and I am writing today, for you to listen and consider my testimony regarding SB 319. Quick background: I am a fifth grade teacher with Tiffin City Schools. I am approaching my 5th year teaching self-contained gifted for the 5th grade, but have been teaching for 9 years, with 20 years previously in the business sector. I have my BBA, MA in Education and my licensure is PreK-3, with 4th/5th generalist, K-12 Reading, and K-12 Gifted Intervention Specialist endorsements.

Reading through the bill, I have made some suggestions/thoughts on what I have witnessed and experienced through this pandemic as an educator, and what I believe would provide better and more equitable results across the K-12 education community.

Sec 17:

Letter E: This section is not valid. Because state assessments did not occur for the 2019-2020, there is no value-added to be calculated. But even if it did occur, the value-added data for the current school year, is used for the next school year evaluations. (Example: My teacher evaluation for this year is matched with my value-added data from last school year because it takes too long for assessments to be scored and value-added to be calculated. So my teacher evaluation is based upon the current year's class, but my student data is based upon last year's students.)

This is a perfect opportunity to look at the restructuring of student data measurements within the schools. ORC 3302.021 clearly states that value-added, when used, should be for grades 3-8 in the subject areas of Reading and Math. Yet, we are still using Science for grades 5 and 8 as part of value-added, although we removed Social Studies for grades 4 and 6. The state is paying an undisclosed amount of money for administration and processing of these tests, which are all computer based and scored, but we can't get our test results until months later. Besides being costly for the state, the districts have had to come up with funds to buy the technology for students to take these assessments, when we were forced to give up paper tests. To note, there have been no advantages to switching from paper to computers. If anything, it has caused more stress upon the students, particularly at the elementary level.

I believe that all teachers should use the same form of student data for evaluations. Right now, we have teachers within not only the same district, but same building and grade levels, that are using value-added, written SLO, or vendor approved assessments. The determination of student growth is vastly different between the SLO/vendor approved assessments vs. value-added. Because SLO/vendor approved assessments are calculated within the district, it is available for the teacher and administrators the same school year. These

also show a more accurate growth due to having a pre and post tests of the materials used. Remember, SLO/vendor approved assessments are all paid for and completed at the local level. Why are we paying for services that are not needed at the state level and already paid for at the local level?

Letter I: Extend or waive shouldn't be an option for the items listed. I believe that a decision needs to be made for each and most are common sense items due to schools being closed.

1. WAIVED-there are too many inconsistencies and biased evaluations due to the pandemic that does not make the evaluations fair. (There is no way an evaluation using the rubric for OTES can be used accurately and fairly on a Zoom meeting vs. a classroom.) And it isn't fair to use evaluations for people when some were completed before and during the pandemic.

2. EXTEND

3. WAIVED

4. WAIVED

5. EXTEND

6. EXTEND

7. WAIVED-unless like our district, we test in 2nd and 5th grades in January, so ours are completed.

Letter M: As stated previously, I have already addressed why value-added shouldn't be used and how unfair it is to use any evaluations completed this year, whether in the classroom vs. Zoom. Teacher A completed their evaluation before the schools closed. Teacher B completed only half of their evaluation before the schools closed. The district decides that Teacher B will finish their evaluation using one of their Zoom sessions. How can any of those evaluations be used? There is no way that Teacher B can be fairly evaluated using the OTES rubric when it isn't meant for these circumstances? And why should Teacher A have to accept their evaluation when Teacher B either didn't have to finish their evaluation or had part of it completed online, where the administrator evaluated on a curve due to circumstances. UNLESS a teacher is under a specific and individualized contract that states an evaluation MUST occur due to the said agreement, all evaluations should be waived for the 2019-2020 school year.

Sec. 7:

Letter A: Because all teachers will have to complete SLOs for the 2020-2021 school year (because there is no value-added rating to use), we should waive all evaluations and roll over all current evaluation ratings and start fresh with the 2020-2021 school year. We had to do this four years ago, so I see no issue with doing it again.

Sec. 8: If I am reading this section correctly, it is my understanding that for the 2020-2021 school year, there will be no measures used to evaluate the student growth measures. All evaluations will only be conducted using teacher performance. I know there will be no

value-added data to be used and that makes sense. But each district is able to have all teachers complete SLOs to be used for the student measures (especially since many teachers already have to use SLOs for their student measure each year). I feel that it isn't a good idea to implement OTES 2.0, but keep OTES 1.0 and use SLOs for all teachers. Again, just like what was completed four years ago.

Sec. 9: IF a principal is able to have an evaluation used WITHOUT using any of their student growth measures, then ALL evaluations, if they MUST be completed, should NOT include the student growth section and only use the teacher performance measure.

Sec. 10: Many districts offer new teachers limited 1 year contracts for a specific period of time. (My district's policy is four-1 year limited contracts, then if the teacher successfully completes those four years, you are offered a multiple year contract, not to exceed 5 years.) If it has been determined that evaluation(s) are not completed and someone is eligible for a multiyear contract, then that person should be granted that contract, as long as they have fulfilled and not violated the requirements per the union contract. Scenario: If I was not up for evaluation this year, there would be no issue for granting me a multiyear contract as long as I have met the requirements. So why should someone who is eligible for a multiyear contract not receive one, due to evaluations not being completed because of the pandemic? What would be the difference?

Sec. 13: Due to the constant budget cuts of education at every government level, you will find many districts are already working with overcrowded classrooms, limited resources, and the minimum number of teachers that can be allowed. Furloughing teachers should not even be an option at this point. While many districts are stretched tight with teachers, some have an abundance of administrators to help with the work. Local boards of education always seem to want to eliminate/cut teachers first, where we should be the absolute last place for this to happen. OEA supports many points in this bill, but I have to agree and believe members due also, that this isn't fair and teacher furloughs will further hurt the local districts and student learning.

I appreciate you taking the time to read and consider my thoughts and stance on the issues of this bill. I hope this pandemic and the changes that schools had to endure, helped you see what is truly important and what is not. I believe that this pandemic has opened the door for many discussions and changes that need to happen for the K-12 education system.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,  
Melanie Sutter