

House Education Primary and Secondary Education Committee

HB 67 – Proponent Written Testimony

February 18, 2021

Alyson Mekinda, Third Grade Teacher in Mentor School District

Chair Manning, Ranking Member Robinson and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of HB 67.

This year, students have gone above and beyond what we could have ever asked of them. Students, teachers and administrators have all worked around the clock to adapt to changing safety measures, as well as switching between styles of learning.

I work as a third grade teacher in a district that has primarily used a hybrid model this year, with a few weeks of fully remote learning. I see every day how hard it is on students to continue to adapt and I am amazed by their resilience. My students continue to be motivated to do their best work every day, however, what their best work looks like fluctuates as their circumstances at home and in this pandemic fluctuate. I have seen how deeply my students are affected when their loved ones are at risk or contract covid. Just like all of us, children see the devastating effects of this pandemic every single day and they can't just leave those feelings behind and attend school with no change. The trauma of living through a global event of this scale impacts students' ability to learn, as feelings of safety and security are crucial for children's development.

We are well aware that students' education has been disrupted since March 2020 and what students have learned and what they can do reflects that. We don't need achievement tests to tell us what we already know and are actively monitoring and assessing. Every day, teachers are taking running records, assessing students' needs and successes and taking steps to meet the needs of students. By comparison, the achievement tests given at the end of the year only provide a tiny snapshot of a child's capabilities and by the time results are given, the school year is over and teachers are unable to further meet those needs.

End of year achievement tests that tell us what we already know without giving us actionable data with which to inform our instruction are simply not worth taking away from precious instructional time this year. We know that between schools being remote in the spring and a mix of hybrid and remote this fall and winter, students have already lost so much instructional time over the past twelve months, why should we take more learning time away from them for testing?

Students are already being assessed in actionable ways and teachers are adapting their instruction to meet the unique needs of students we are serving in completely unprecedented times. Not only this, but the ways they are currently being assessed put less stress and anxiety on students who are already facing the trauma of a global pandemic. As such, it is my opinion as an educator that House Bill 67 is a great step towards meeting the changing needs of students and should be supported.

Thank you for your consideration. I am available to respond to any questions you may have.

Alyson Mekinda