

**House Education Primary and Secondary Education Committee**

**HB 67 – Proponent Written Testimony**

**February 18, 2021**

**Sean McCullough, Intervention Specialist, Licking Heights High School**

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.

These past twelve months have been extremely difficult for students all across Ohio. All students have missed time in the classroom, leaving lessons to be done via video conference, and in some cases, left the internet as their only source of hope to connect with educators in our state. This has led to exponentially high failures of classes and has threatened students to not graduate at a number we have never seen before.

Sitting in my chair, logging on to Zoom, and waiting for students every day to maybe come to class has been, without a doubt, the most depressing moment of my career. Hearing the doorbell turn on, hearing students leaving mid-lesson due to internet issues, and not being there to progress monitor my students in live time has been soul-crushing. I feel like I have failed at relationship building, I feel that my lessons are inadequate, and I have had difficulty differentiating lessons due to the lack of in-person instruction.

The students, though, have been hurt so much more by this. The trauma of not being able to be social around their friends, fear that if students walk next to someone, they could contract or pass along COVID-19, or in some cases, see someone die due to the effects of COVID-19 are harrowing for children who are trying to develop their personalities, ideals, and choices that will shape their adult lives.

It is February 18, 2021 and, in a month, we will be asking students, students who have been traumatized by COVID-19 and how it has turned their lives into peril compared to this time last year to take state exams. How is that okay? I was grateful for House Bill 404 which gave all districts the right to wave teacher evaluations for the 2020-2021 school year to ease the burden of school districts but you unable make the same accommodations for our students? What precedent does that send children? Students need to come back to school and engage with their educators, not take tests. The social/emotional burden on our children has been profound and adding the anxiety of testing to an already turbulent school year of inconsistency.

I encourage you to please waive state testing next year and let educators help the lives of our students at this time rather than bring them back to the classroom to receive a test.

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