

June 15, 2021

Chairwoman Manning, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in opposition to House Bill 151.

As an educator with a career that spans over 30 years in education, encompassing preschool through the university level, I wholly support continuation of the RE Program and RESA for numerous reasons.

At the beginning of my teaching career, I was given a classroom and materials and was told to write a curriculum for my public preschool class. I had no mentor or structure to follow, which was overwhelming. The RE program ensures that new teachers in Ohio have the structure and mentorship in place to assure this no longer happens.

As an academic coach I have been able to observe first-hand the positive impact that completing the RE program has on entry level teachers. The program goes hand in hand with academic coaching to assist teachers in reflection of their own teaching practice. This is a critical skill for teachers to learn that enables them to continue to improve throughout their careers. With reflection, teachers learn to continually adjust their practices to best suit their students' needs.

A mentor can serve many different roles. Prior to the RE program, in many districts, a mentor served more of a friend or cheerleader role. They introduced the new teacher to their colleagues, showed them how to work the copier, met them for lunch, and provided encouragement. However, prior to the RE program, many mentors were not helping new teachers with classroom management strategies, learning standards, formative assessment, etc. The RE program provides mentors with the training and resources to support new teachers in these critical areas. For example, the RE program hosts networking sessions that allow program coordinators and mentors to share resources, discuss best practices, and learn from each other.

At this point in my career, I educate pre-service teachers at the university level. The RE program has been instrumental in providing information via the scores of the RESA. This data is in turn analyzed and reflected upon by professors and curriculum committees to develop and revise curriculum to support areas of concern to better prepare our Ohio teachers.

In the past, concerns have been raised that the quality of Resident Educator programs varies depending on the district. Unfortunately, House Bill 151 would exacerbate this issue by eliminating the RE program, which provides mentor training and resources for all districts. In addition, without the RESA, we will not be able to identify districts, schools, and teachers that need additional support. If House Bill 151 passes, our profession will take a step backwards, and many new teachers will be assigned a mentor who does not have the training or resources to provide comprehensive support. We will confront the very same problems that led to the creation of the RE program in the first place.

Of great concern among educators is the state constantly changes the requirements and/or proposes changing the requirements, which makes it difficult to plan and implement an effective

program. Unfortunately, this bill will only eliminate state support and resources for mentors, force districts to spend time reinventing the wheel, and remove the one statewide measure (RESA) that shows the effectiveness of the programs.

Thank you for consideration of my written testimony.

Respectfully,  
Sherry Jacobs