



Fort Frye Local School District

510 5th Street
P.O. Box 1149
Beverly, OH 45715
Phone: 740-984-2497

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

Please know I am writing in regards to House Bill (HB) 583. My name is Krista L. Ross and I am an Elementary Principal of Lowell Elementary and Salem-Liberty Elementary, which are located in the Fort Frye Local School District. We are a rural district located in Southeastern Ohio. I am writing this letter to testify in support of HB 583.

As a principal of two small rural schools I would like you to know it is very hard at times to find and fill all substitute positions in our district. Therefore, I am asking you to please consider extending this House Bill. I have been a school administrator for the past eight years and I have seen a MAJOR decline of substitutes especially over the last two to three years. Yes, I am positive that the Covid-19 pandemic has had a HUGE effect on this, but substitute shortage has always been a problem for Fort Frye. With that being said, I do not see it getting any better any time soon.

As you can imagine having a shortage of substitutes can cause many issues for a school building/district. When we short subs we are having to currently pull my Title 1 or Intervention Specialist teachers to go cover such classes. Please know by doing this we are overall cheating the students who need their intervention services throughout the day. Prior to the COVID pandemic we even went to the extreme of having to double up classes and have one regular education teacher cover 2 different grade levels. My buildings are quite small. I only have one class per grade level; therefore, when doubling up I am mixing different grade levels together, which is simply NOT a best practice in 2022.

Other ways our building has handled uncovered classes in the past is that I have personally covered classes, which then takes away from my work as a building leader. At times some of my teachers have even had to cover open rooms during their planning time, which takes away from them prepping for their regular education class. Lastly, I have even had to simply cancel special classes like gym, art and music and place those teachers in a regular education classroom for a day. This would result in not having a special for the students if I cannot get all areas covered.

Please know by providing the temporary substitute flexibility the last two years this has helped my district and individual schools to obtain a few more substitutes that would not be available otherwise. If this House Bill does not get extended my district can and will simply suffer. It could go as far as having to shut down a building for a day or week when there are simply NOT enough teachers and subs to go around. I know personally if this House Bill is not continued I will lose some very good and dependable subs who are currently helping us get by.

In closing, I want to thank Representatives Bird and Jones for sponsoring this bill currently and I truly hope and pray that we can continue this difference maker for the 2022-2023 school year. Therefore, I urge you to approve HB 583.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Krista L. Ross

