

## **OHIO HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**Melissa Kendralla  
CTE Teacher  
Senior Lead Professional License  
Consistently High Performing Teacher  
Master Teacher  
Master ED**

### **HB 554 – Proponent Testimony**

**May 10, 2022**

Good afternoon Chair Manning, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the Ohio House Primary and Secondary Committee. I would like to speak to you in support of the passage of HB 554. I am a current Career Technical Educator at Westland High School in South-Western City schools. As a Business and Industry professional, I entered the education profession 22 years ago. The transition was not without challenges, and rigor to ensure I was suited to teach the students of Ohio. I have met each demanding licensure requirement along the way. Including 36 quarter hour teacher preparation program at The Ohio State University, 6 Semester Hours to renew multiple licenses, and Teacher Leadership Courses for Teacher Leader Endorsement- -all while teaching full time, advising clubs, and completing a resident educator program. Having experienced this and now am a designated, Consistently High Performing Teacher in the state of Ohio (for the second time), I do not advocate to lessen the licensure requirements to ensure quality educators in our profession. I do however, oppose what appears to be a punitive amount of coursework (9 Semester hours or equivalent) in a short amount of time for those teachers that have expired licenses. Not knowing the conditions of the expiration or what will be overcome to return to the profession, I cannot imagine making that transition in today's teaching shortage, and daily demands of a teacher in an understaffed situation. These are the schools – the understaffed schools- that will most likely be seeking these teachers.

Today, educators and students are facing the daily challenges of understaffing in our schools. Educators with exhaustion, stretched to the point of feeling ineffective in our own classrooms, due to “covering” and assisting with those understaffed are leaving the profession at very high rates. Furthermore, the substitute burden falls on those educators in the schools due to a current shortage of educators. This has created a critical situation in Ohio Schools. A situation that is a direct hardship on educators. These conditions need to be considered when reviewing the existing recently revised State Board rule regarding professional educator license reinstatement. The revised rule, effective November 4, 2021, allows for the issuance of a one-year, nonrenewable “reinstatement license” valid in the same grade levels and curriculum areas as an individual's expired license, at the request of an employing school district. ORC

3319.222 provides the reinstatement license is available to an individual whose professional educator license has expired for at least one year from the effective date of the reinstatement license. The holder of a reinstatement license must complete, prior to its expiration, either **9 semester hours** of coursework or 27 continuing education units (270 contact hours) or other equivalent activities related to classroom teaching or the area of licensure. Upon completion of the professional development requirements, the expired professional educator license may be renewed.

Requiring 9 semester hours in one year for a former educator to be relicensed is a very heavy workload and financial burden for an effective educator to compete while working full-time to transition to a Professional Educators license in one year's time. Question: How many educators took advantage of this, and completed the 9 hours? Experience in the classroom cannot be substituted with book work.

To put this in perspective, current professional license holders are required to complete 6 semester hours or equivalent PD over a five-year period to renew an expiring license. I question the punitive appearance of the additional reinstatement requirements to be accomplished in 12 months, and advocate for the adoption of HB 554 to equate the requirements to a 2-year timeframe to complete 6 semester hours. This would still be a tremendous burden in two years, but acceptable to ensure quality educators for our students, and reasonably compared to an unexpired license renewal.

I must mention the existing rule does not appear to address whether expired professional educator's "certificates," issued under former law, are eligible for reinstatement. We need educators desperately, but we need qualified, effective, fully licensed educators for our students - nothing less. HB554 address this as well.

In summary, with the current challenges of our schools to provide a licensed, effective educator for our students, in every subject and grade level, I would encourage the committee to support HB 554 which reduces the extensive one-year requirements for renewal and provides an eligibility requirement for the educator's reinstatement after completion. This bill further supports the *Each Child Our Future*, by expanding the resources for diverse and quality licensed educators, provides a solution to some of the shortages in our school, and a pathway to one of the most rewarding professions in our state, Education.

Thank you for your time and please reach out if you have any questions or need clarification on thoughts. Your time is valuable and I want my comments to be a brief insight to a person that has taken alternate routes and is currently teaching in a public school.