

Opponent Testimony for H.B. 445
Primary and Secondary Education Committee
November 10, 2024

Kari Kendzerski

Chair Gayle Manning, Vice Chair Sarah Fowler Arthur, Ranking Member Phillip M. Robinson, Jr., and members of the Primary and Secondary Education Committee,

My name is Kari Kendzerski and I live in Columbus, OH. I am the parent of two students in Columbus City Schools. I am writing to express my opposition to [HB 445](#) and I urge you to vote against this bill.

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce supports a Whole Child Framework, and, as such, has stated the following: “When students are **healthy**, feel **safe**, are **supported** through strong systems and relationships, are **challenged** and experience success, and are **engaged** in learning that is relevant and meaningful, they are more likely to enjoy learning, develop positive social skills and achieve greater success.” This statement is taken directly from the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce website.

Students are being removed from school during time scheduled for lunch, recess, and Unified Arts (arts, health, and physical education instruction). Removing students during these essential times is counter to the Whole Child Framework. Lunch and recess time provides essential social emotional learning opportunities where students have the ability to build strong relationships with fellow classmates. These relationships create a feeling of safety. Unified Arts instructions engage and challenge many students who may be less excited about traditional classroom learning. Again, allowing students to be removed during the school day for RTRI programs is directly counter to the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce’s Whole Child Framework.

Furthermore, public schools should be places where every student feels a sense of belonging and safety. RTRI programs have been known to involve students in recruitment or retention, which can strain relationships and create distractions in the classroom. One of the main proponents of this bill, Lifewise Academy, teaches harmful content around LGBTQ+ identities. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community, my children’s safety in the public school setting is compromised when students are permitted to be removed from the school, during the school day, to be taught discriminatory and harmful things about my family.

For these reasons, I ask that you vote no on HB 445.