

Written testimony  
Re: HB 117/HB 33  
From: Jen Schwanke, parent and educator

In favor of eliminating the mandatory retention component of the Third Grade Reading Guarantee

I have been a school administrator for almost 20 years. I feel the required retention of third graders who have not met requirements for the "3GG" has been a terribly unfair and unreasonable practice. I urge lawmakers to listen to those of us who have worked tirelessly to support young readers and hear us when we say the lifelong negative implications of retention are irreversible. There are countless factors inhibiting a child's mastery of literacy—all factors we will continue to address—but to punish a child for issues outside their control (and the control of their teachers) must stop.

I have seen firsthand the negative lifelong impact of this decision on young people. I would be more than happy to tell you stories about individual children and how retention affected them for years after the decision was made. These stories will break your heart. I urge you to remove the mandatory retention both for this year's children (those who learned to read during COVID) and future children as well.

Thank you,

Jen Schwanke  
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