

Members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is Mathew Felton-Koestler. Thank you for considering my written testimony. I have worked in the field of teacher education at the university level for the last 13 years, 9 of which have been here in Ohio. I have a PhD in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

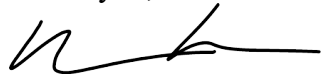
I am writing today in opposition to the changes to grade band licensure in HB 33 (and originally proposed in HB 9). I am advocating for the removal of the grade band licensure changes indicated on page 1356, lines 41655-41672. First, this is not an appropriations-related item and therefore should not be included in a budget bill. Instead, it should be discussed and deliberated by the appropriate education committees in consultation with educational agencies and specialists.

In addition, I oppose this change on its merits. Expanding the elementary-level licensure to include middle school will dilute the expertise of teachers. There is a significant body of research that points to the specialized knowledge needed to teach. The most effective teachers have deep knowledge about children's development, teaching techniques, and flexible and varied approaches to the academic content. Expanding licensure to cover grades K-8 will erode teachers' ability to learn these topics with the depth needed for effective teaching.

This change also makes it more likely that middle school students will have teachers who are not committed to working with this age group. This is in direct contrast with recommendations from professional organizations, such as the Association for Middle-Level Education.

This approach to addressing teacher shortages is overly broad, will take too long to implement, and undermines high quality education for Ohio's children.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mathew Felton-Koestler', with a stylized, cursive-like script.

Mathew Felton-Koestler