

Lorrie Kubaszewski

May 10, 2023 - Testimony HB33

I stand here before you as a person who is celebrating her 40<sup>th</sup> year as an educator in Ohio. I stand here before you as a retired 30-year middle level teacher, who has taught 3,360 middle level students. I stand here before you as a Middle Childhood Education Lecturer for Wright State University. I have instructed 10 middle level cohorts over the last ten years. I stand here before you as an educator who is serving as a region representative, and has served as vice president, president, and past president of the Ohio Middle Level Association. Above all, I stand here as an advocate for all middle level students of the great state of Ohio to oppose HB33.

A handful of years ago, while I was President of the Ohio Middle Level Association, the idea of eliminating the middle level licensure band was being talked about in these halls. In 2017, myself and 3 other representatives from OMLA came to this building and spoke with the assistant to Peggy Lehner and Matt Huffman about this issue. After listening to us share why this would be a step backwards and not one in the best interest of the students, Matt Huffman said, and I will never forget this, "Thank you for taking the time to come and speak with me. I would never have known to think about the points you have addressed."

So, I am here today to address the same issue and hopefully have you think about how this bill will move teacher education backwards and ultimately reduce the quality of education for middle level students.

I ask you to think about this question, if you had a heart condition would you seek help from a family practitioner or a cardiologist? If you had problems with your car engine, would you seek help from an auto mechanic or general mechanic? I know that in both cases you would want the best service, so you would choose the person who specializes in the car motor and the doctor who specializes in the heart. That is what a middle level educator is, a specialist in middle childhood education. If you are the parent of a middle level student, don't you want the most knowledgeable teacher for their developmental age?

In my middle childhood education classes, the students are taught about the young adolescents': physical characteristics; physical needs; patterns of growth and maturation; physiological changes; intellectual development; intellectual characteristics; learning preferences and styles; emotional development; personality development; and social development. All of these are examined with the middle level student in mind. If my instruction was forced to change to include grades PK-8, I would have no choice but to cut vital instruction that allows the middle level educator to be what is needed by the students in grades 4-9.

Maya Angelou said, when we know better, we can do better." We know so much more, today, about how the middle level student learns and that is what is shared in middle childhood education classes. Research based teaching methods that meet the needs of the students at the middle level. They learn how to build an atmosphere in a classroom where self-consciousness, awkward middle level students who are afraid to make a move due to what others might think of them, can thrive! We know better and should do better, this bill will not make the education of middle level students better, it will move it backwards.

How do I know this. I am a teacher who holds a permanent 1-8 teaching license. I start off many of my middle childhood courses at Wright State saying, "I wish I could have my students back from my first 8-

10 years of teaching to be able to say, I am sorry. Why? Because it took me that long to teach myself through experience and professional development that I sought out to become an effective middle level teacher.

On behalf of middle level teachers and middle level students, I ask you not to move forward with this bill. We know better, so please, let's do better. In a time where students are still recovering from the lockdowns, and teachers are working to close the learning gaps created, making another move to weaken the students' educational journey would be devastating.

Thank you for your time and for the opportunity to advocate for the middle level students of Ohio.