

Opponent Testimony for SB 293

Senate Education Committee

November 15, 2024

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony. My name is Stacie Novelli, and I live in the Copley-Fairlawn City School district. I am the parent of a young child in elementary school and active volunteer with the PTA.

I have serious concerns about Senate Bill 293 and its effects on our schools and my child's education. I urge you not to allow this bill to pass out of committee and to permanently remove this bill from the committee agenda.

Here are some of my concerns about SB 293:

- It further limits instructional time for special subjects like art, PE, music, or library. These subjects are not expendable and are just as important for our children to partake in.
- It promotes lost unstructured time for social and play time at recess. As the parent of a child with autism, I can tell you that social interactions in school have been absolutely crucial to my child's development. And really, this time is important for all children. Most K-5 students only receive 30-40 minutes a day - we cannot afford to allow this time to be taken away from any of our students.
- I'm concerned at the lack of clarity around required safety measures. Aside from background checks, what about children with disabilities and medical needs? My child is also subject to medical emergencies and would need someone trained on how to handle them with him at all times, for example, like he has in school. I'm afraid of children being put at risk in multiple ways.
- Governor Dewine has recently promoted research showing that if a student momentarily views their cell phone, it takes 20 minutes for that student's distraction to wane. If a student picks up a cell phone and interacts with it, it takes 50 minutes for that student's distraction to wane. How much more distracting is leaving school grounds for a religious release program? How do we justify passing a law requiring schools to limit distractions in the form of cell

phones and subsequently passing a law requiring schools to allow the complete distraction of students from their education by leaving the school grounds entirely for a portion of the day on a regular basis?

For these reasons, I ask that you stop this bill from passing out of committee or receiving any additional hearings. Thank you for your time.

Stacie Novelli