

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 293. My name is Bruce D. Marshall, and I am from Allen County.

I am a retired public-school teacher having taught for 35 years in Ohio, grades 5th, 6th, and 7th grades. I also coached junior high boys track as well as cross country for almost 20 years. Over the years I have seen how our students are becoming more disrespectful for others as well as lacking in self-discipline. They seem to be only concerned about themselves. On top of this is the epidemic of bullying that is escalated from social media.

This is my 4th year of teaching at the Elida LifeWise Academy. I have witnessed how students are changing in their attitudes towards others for the better. The teachers in the classrooms are noticing a difference as well. The administrators are having fewer discipline issues concerning their students. Students who attend LifeWise classes are not only learning Bible stories but also valuable character traits that they can use for the rest of their lives. A recent independent study by Thomas P. Miller & Associates found that LifeWise programs improve attendance and behavior in participating schools.

Parents want moral and religious education for their children. A 2024 RMG Research poll revealed that 76% of voters support moral and character education for public school students.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to advocate for Senate Bill 293.

Sincerely,

Bruce D. Marshall