



To: Members of the House Education Committee

From: Michael J. McKenna, Headmaster Mars Hill Academy, Mason, OH

Re: Proponent Testimony HB 326

I would like to thank Chairman Fowler-Arthur, and Rep. Ritter for requesting testimony in support of the Classical Learning Test (CLT).

### **Background**

The Classic Learning Test (CLT) is a college entrance exam launched in 2015 by Jeremy Tate, a former public school teacher and SAT test prep company owner who came to recognize a need for an alternative to the SAT and ACT duopoly. Similar to the other standardized exams, the CLT assesses critical reading, writing, and mathematics skills. The CLT is nevertheless unique among college entrance exams in that it is rooted in the liberal arts tradition rather than modern pedagogical trends like the Common Core. As such, CLT's mission is to reconnect knowledge and virtue by providing meaningful assessments and connections to seekers of truth, goodness, and beauty. As headmaster of Mars Hill Academy in Mason, Ohio, a classical Christian school, assessments which support those virtues is of lasting value to me and the community I represent.

The CLT aims to assess not only students' achievement, but also their aptitude. It measures skills such as the ability to communicate clearly, to read complex prose, to understand metaphors, to think logically, and to solve puzzles. The test sources the majority of its reading passages from classic and historical texts that have withstood the test of time. And it is also not bound by any particular curriculum, so *it can be of value to students in any type of school.*

The CLT was primarily used by high school graduates to earn admissions to private universities around the country. However, it has expanded significantly in recent years. The company now provides a suite of tests for students in grades 3 through 12, including the CLT3-8 tests, the CLT-10 and the CLT. The lower grade tests have proven immensely valuable to parents, administrators, teachers, and students in Christian K-12 schools, the growing classical education community, as well as home school families and groups. The CLT is also increasingly used by public school students since the test's adoption in Florida in 2023. There lawmakers made key policy changes to enable testing choice for students at nearly every level of education, and the Florida Board of Governors approved the CLT as an admissions test for all of the state's public universities.

### **Rationale**

**Diversified Assessment Opportunities:** The inclusion of the CLT provides a diversified approach to student assessment, catering to the varying academic strengths and learning styles of individual students. It transcends modern academic fads and controversies with its focus on the Western world's greatest written works.

**Enhanced College Readiness:** The CLT is recognized by more than 260 colleges and universities as an alternative to the SAT and ACT (find the full list at [www.cltexam.com/colleges/](http://www.cltexam.com/colleges/)). By adopting the CLT, states will provide students with additional pathways to demonstrate their college readiness.

**Not Constrained by Curriculum:** The CLT is available to any student and does not assess any particular curriculum, which distinguishes it from the SAT and ACT, which align with Common Core. Therefore, students from schools operating under any curriculum can find equal value in the CLT.

**Renewed Focus on Literacy:** At a time when even the country's most elite colleges are facing **challenges** with students' literacy and traditional tests are being **watered down** to meet lower expectations, CLT stands apart. Our author bank simultaneously provides transparency into the general content of our test while challenging students to contend with rich, meaningful texts.

**Proven Value in Public Education:** Since CLT's widespread adoption in Florida in 2023, public school administrators and families have increasingly chosen the test. More than 50 of the state's 67 school districts have offered the test to students and approximately 150,000 CLT tests will be administered in the state this year. Additionally, all of the state's public universities accept the CLT.

**Strengthens Educational Choice:** While the CLT is becoming increasingly popular among public school students since its adoption in Florida, it remains a top assessment choice for students, families, teachers, and administrators in non-public education of varying forms, including homeschoolers. Incorporating the CLT can complement and reinforce the growing array of educational models proliferating thanks to the expansion of school choice around the country.

For additional information, including the CLT Technical Report, Concordance Report, and other research, please visit: [cltexam.com/reports](http://cltexam.com/reports).

If I can be of any further service, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

Cordially,



Michael J. McKenna  
Headmaster, Mars Hill Academy

