

House Education Committee
HB 523 Proponent Testimony
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Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators
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Good afternoon, Chair Fowler-Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Brennan, and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 523. My name is Colleen Mudore, and I am here representing the Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators. I am providing this testimony on behalf of OAESA in support of House Bill 523, known as the Future Educators Support Act.

OAESA represents elementary and middle-level school leaders across the state of Ohio. Our members are responsible for recruiting, mentoring, evaluating, and retaining teachers who directly serve Ohio's youngest learners. From this statewide leadership perspective, we recognize both the urgency and the long-term implications of the current educator workforce challenges.

House Bill 523 addresses structural barriers within the teacher preparation pipeline.

Student teaching is a full-time clinical experience that mirrors the responsibilities of licensed educators. Student teachers engage in lesson planning, instruction, assessment, data analysis, family communication, and participation in school-based professional responsibilities. Despite these expectations, they are currently not compensated.

From an administrative perspective, financial hardship during the student teaching semester has become a significant barrier to entry into the profession. Candidates often report the need to maintain outside employment or incur additional debt during this period. These conditions may discourage otherwise qualified individuals from completing preparation programs.

The bill's provision allowing school districts and other public educational entities to compensate student teachers at no less than minimum wage provides flexibility at the local level. It does not mandate payment; rather, it authorizes districts to invest in their future workforce.

Additionally, the cost-of-living stipend and licensure test fee reimbursement provisions, contingent upon appropriated funds, directly address financial obstacles associated with

certification. These measures support equitable access to the profession, particularly for candidates with demonstrated financial need.

The authorization for institutions of higher education to reduce differential tuition during the student teaching semester reflects the nature of the clinical experience. During this period, candidates are serving in public schools full time rather than participating in traditional on-campus coursework.

Finally, the inclusion of teachers on Ohio's in-demand jobs list aligns workforce development policy with current staffing realities. Elementary administrators across Ohio continue to report difficulty filling positions in general education and specialized areas. Recognizing teaching as an in-demand profession supports strategic alignment between education policy and workforce planning.

On behalf of OAESA, we believe House Bill 523 provides practical, flexible tools to strengthen Ohio's educator pipeline while respecting local decision-making authority.

We would also respectfully encourage consideration of expanding the legislation to further strengthen Ohio's broader education leadership pipeline. Specifically, including licensure test fee reimbursements for educators pursuing administrative credentials would remove a financial barrier for aspiring principals and assistant principals. Additionally, we encourage consideration of adding principals to Ohio's list of in-demand jobs. School leadership vacancies are increasingly difficult to fill, particularly in high-need districts, and the sustainability of our schools depends on a strong principal pipeline just as much as a strong teacher pipeline.

Supporting aspiring administrators alongside future teachers would reflect a comprehensive, long-term workforce strategy for Ohio's schools.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your continued work in supporting Ohio's educators and students.