



Kilbourne Middle School  
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February 24, 2026

To Chairwoman Fowler-Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, & Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Greg Garris and I serve as the principal of Kilbourne Middle School in the Worthington City School District. I am writing today to provide testimony in support of HB 523.

In the spring of 2009, my teacher preparation program at the College of Wooster culminated with a student teaching experience. From February to May of that school year I was responsible for the planning, lesson delivery, grading, and effective operation of the classroom. My student teaching was the equivalent of a full-time job! In the evenings, I worked a part-time job as a tutor at Sylvan Learning Center to pay tuition for the full-time student teaching job.

My story is not unique. Preservice teachers across the state of Ohio must go to great lengths to support themselves through this culminating experience. The combination of working the equivalent of a full-time job while also paying full tuition presents a significant barrier to entry in the field of education. At a time when teachers are needed more than ever, we need to make the path clearer, not add more obstacles. HB 523 does just that.

In my role as a principal, I see firsthand the hard work and sacrifices of our pre-service teachers. In particular, I've seen the struggles that aspiring educators entering the field after college go through to earn their license. These individuals often work as substitute teachers or paraprofessionals while they complete coursework toward their teaching license. However, when it comes time to complete their student teaching, they have to quit their job. This reality keeps talented prospective educators out of the field.

HB 523 validates the significant work of student teachers and provides a lifeline to aspiring educators without a support system in place.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Greg Garris

Principal  
Kilbourne Middle School