

Senate Finance Committee
Amend Sub. HB 64
Testimony of Jennifer Fulk
Third Grade Teacher, Newark City Schools
June 10, 2015

Thank you, Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chairman Coley, Ranking Member Skindell, and members of the Finance Committee. I appreciate this chance to ask you to support restoring INFOhio funding.

As a third grade teacher in an elementary building with a free and reduced lunch rate of about 85%, I see many underprivileged children and families. Most of my students come from broken homes and families where education is not a number one priority. With that being said, as their teacher, and as someone who cares very deeply about them, I try to provide as many resources as I can to make learning fun and enjoyable so that they will continue to learn and grow and see all of the possibilities that lay in front of them.

Last year as I entered my 6th year of teaching, I was faced with a very challenging group of students. Not only did I have the third grade guarantee to worry about it, I also had more students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) than I had ever had before. Some of my IEP students were reading on a first grade level and it was my job to help them grow as readers so they would not fail the reading OAA. A student of mine named Dylan was one of those first grade readers in the third grade. He was not interested in reading, not interested in becoming a good reader, and had very little if any resources at home to help with this issue. This is when I was introduced to BookFlix on infohio.org. A great resource for young students in order to help them read, but most importantly, a resource that was enjoyable and fun and made them find a love for reading. Dylan has an IEP and came to me last year reading on a level D. He did not pass the first reading OAA and therefore was a candidate of the third grade guarantee. At his mid-year IEP meeting with his mother, we were explaining the importance of reading with him at home and she told us that he loved the BookFlix website and he begged to go to the library to use it as often as she could take him. Dylan loved BookFlix in my classroom as well. Anytime throughout the day when he had the chance he was on BookFlix. This website made him grow as a reader, and allowed him to find a love for books.

Not only has Dylan found a love for BookFlix, but this website is used school-wide and on a daily basis. Students across the grade levels love this website and use it daily to help build reading abilities and reading interests. The computer animations and the comparison of a fiction vs. non-fiction books are some of the great attributes this website provides our students. BookFlix is a great resource for an elementary classroom and I know that without it I would have a large number of students who would be very disappointed and less successful as readers.

By the way....Dylan passed the test and can't stop smiling. Nor can his mother or his teacher. My school cannot provide BookFlix on its own. I'm asking you to please reinstate these INFOhio dollars so all our students can be as successful as Dylan. Thank you for your consideration.