



Good morning, Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Ryan, Ranking Member Cera, and members of the House Finance Committee. Thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify today on House Bill 49.

My name is Matt Verber, and I am the Executive Director of Policy and Advocacy for Educopia, which is the vendor for Ohio's Resident Educator Summative Assessment.

For my testimony today, I would like to focus on the proposed repeal of Ohio Revised Code Section 3319.223, which would abolish the Ohio teacher residency program.

The Ohio Resident Educator Program, which began in 2011, is a four-year comprehensive induction program for beginning teachers who hold a Resident Educator license. The first two years of the program are focused on Resident Educators receiving support and formative instructional feedback from their mentors. During the third year, Resident Educators take the Resident Educator Summative Assessment (RESA), which provides teachers with the opportunity to demonstrate to objective assessors that they have the skills needed to lead a classroom anywhere in the state. In the fourth and final year of the Resident Educator Program, teachers explore ways to become leaders in their buildings and districts. After successfully completing the program and the RESA, teachers are eligible for professional licensure.

Ohio's comprehensive Resident Educator Program provides the necessary framework for beginning teachers to receive regular, ongoing support and both formal and informal professional development opportunities. The program gives Resident Educators time to develop in the profession and gain confidence through the support of an experienced mentor and a network of their fellow Resident Educators. Being a new teacher is incredibly challenging, which makes having a strong mentor and peer group critically important. Since the mentors do not formally assess or evaluate the teachers, Resident Educators are able to openly discuss areas where they need help. Teacher residency programs have been shown to improve teacher retention and effectiveness, which leads to higher levels of student performance.

As the vendor for the RESA, Educopia is committed to continuous improvement based on stakeholder feedback. Since the RESA was first implemented statewide in 2013-2014, improvements have been made each year. Over the past year, we have engaged with a diverse group of stakeholders through surveys, focus groups, and meetings. From listening to their feedback, we have developed plans for extensive

enhancements to the RESA, which would significantly reduce the burden on teachers while maintaining the integrity of the assessment. We are also working on developing new resources to support both candidates and mentors.

As Ohio teachers go through the RESA process, they are required to analyze and reflect on their practice, which teachers overwhelmingly stress as very impactful. For example, a Columbus-area teacher commented during a recent focus group, “The greatest benefit by far is learning the teaching strategy of reflection, which is one of the most important tools of being an educator.” In reflecting on their practice, teachers consider what they are doing, why they are doing it, and how they can do it better next time. This is certainly a skill that every beginning teacher should master.

In addition, the objective data from the RESA allows the state, districts, and teacher preparation programs to identify strengths and weaknesses and effectively target resources on training and professional development opportunities. For example, last year’s statewide data shows that classroom management is an area of strength for Ohio’s beginning teachers while differentiation of instruction, which is a difficult skill, is an area where they need more support.

Ohio’s Resident Educator Program and the RESA provide the framework for beginning teachers to receive the support they need at a critical time in their careers and helps ensure every Ohio kid has an effective teacher in front of the classroom. Ohio’s teachers and students would benefit from maintaining the teacher residency program and using the data to target professional development resources where they would be most impactful.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.