

May 29, 2017

To Whom This May Concern:

I am writing to you in regards to Substitute House Bill 49. I strongly oppose the provision to eliminate the Resident Educator program, including RESA. As a public school teacher and administrator for the past 32 years, I have experienced some of the mentoring programs in which our new teachers have participated. The current program is by far the best mentoring program that Ohio teachers have seen in a long time.

Over the past few years, I have been involved with the Resident Educator program as the program coordinator for my district. I have seen many teachers benefit from the mentoring that is required in years 1 and 2 of the program. I fear that districts will not require this costly support if the state mandate is removed. During Year 3 of the program, I have seen very accurate results from the RESA. Our district has had teachers score in the top 100 scorers on the assessment and we have also had to terminate employment because of non-passage of the assessment. As I work with these educators, I think the results of the RESA are an accurate reflection of the teacher capabilities. Those who have struggled to pass the test are also those who have some issues in the classroom. Those who score well are our skilled teachers.

The Resident Educator program allows teachers to reflect on their teaching during the course of their first four years in education - not just their first year - and develop themselves in their profession. The mentorship and summative assessment allow teachers to take control of their new careers with the much needed support of a veteran teacher. Without a doubt, the new teachers in my district are much more prepared for this career and, most importantly, are providing the best education possible for our state's youth. This is good news for our families, as they can be confident that we are providing a rigorous, engaging, and caring educational environment for their children.

I have also experienced the program as a RESA assessor. In this role, I have seen evidence of truly outstanding teachers who will positively impact student education. I have also seen evidence of educators who are not fully ready for the challenges of educating students. The RE program and RESA provides the structure and framework for important educational practices for teachers as they refine their practice.

It is true that completing the RESA is time intensive. New legislation allowing districts to exempt teachers from completing OTES during the RESA years will help. In addition, new revisions to RESA for the 2017-2018 will eliminate some redundancy in the tasks while maintaining the strong alignment with the Ohio Standards for the Teaching Profession. I urge legislators to continue to maintain the Resident Educator program requirements and allow time for implementation of and evaluation of the revisions.

The Resident Educator program, including RESA, is an amazing program for our state. Educopia, ODE, and everyone involved in the process are continuing to demonstrate to our country why Ohio is an amazing place for children to be educated. Please do not dismantle a program that is working. Our children, our families, our schools, and our communities are better as a result of this mentoring program for our new teachers.

I hope you will consider my comments and keep the Resident Educator Program as a vital resource for Ohio's teachers.

Respectfully,

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