



Proponent Testimony: HB 497

***First Ring Schools Collaborative &
Ohio Mid-Sized Urban Districts Leadership Collaborative***

Ohio House Primary & Secondary Education Committee

March 29, 2022

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Primary & Secondary Education Committee: thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 497.

The First Ring Schools Collaborative and the Ohio Mid-Sized Urban Districts Leadership Collaborative collectively represent 26 public school districts across the state. Our schools collaborate to address challenges faced by our students and, wherever possible, to remove barriers to their success. Our common goals are to educate, support, and encourage students to be their most successful.

A key component to achieving those goals is ensuring students are equipped to be strong readers. As each of you know, student literacy is critical for long-term success and serves as the foundation for life-long learning. Lack of reading proficiency serves as a common denominator in rates of school discipline, attendance and graduation issues, and juvenile crime.¹

Employing a one-size-fits-all model, as currently utilized under the Third Grade Reading Guarantee, is detrimental to students, who each learn in a different way. HB 497 would eliminate student retention under the Third Grade Reading Guarantee and would require only one administration of the English Language Arts assessment. We fully support each of these provisions. It is important to note the bill does not change existing language concerning literacy interventions, which remain vital to a robust approach for struggling readers. Requiring just one, rather than two, annual Language Arts Assessment allows educators to redirect their focus on interventions and other supports for non-proficient readers.

High-stakes standardized testing can cause anxiety for young students and may not fully reflect a child's learning level. Further, implementation of the Third Grade Reading Guarantee has not resulted in significant improvements to fourth-graders reading achievement.² Further research shows that students who are retained suffer lower self-esteem, experience negative social and emotional impacts, and view retention as a punishment rather than a tool to help them succeed.³

We appreciate that HB 497 removes a barrier that districts face when working with parents and educators to determine the best path forward for each child.

In closing, we thank this Committee for your time and attention. We look forward to continuing discussions surrounding this important piece of legislation and urge your support.

¹ [The Children's Reading Foundation](#)

² Logan et al. "[Has Ohio's Third-Grade Reading Guarantee Led to Reading Improvements?](#)" Crane Center for Early Childhood Research and Policy (2019)

³ Miami-Dade Public Schools [Information Capsule](#) (2019)