

House Bill 497- Proponent Testimony
House Primary and Secondary Education Committee
March 27, 2022

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the Committee:

My name is Sean McCullough and I am an Intervention Specialist at Licking Heights High School. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 497 to eliminate student retention under the Third Grade Reading Guarantee.

I support HB 497 because I do not believe that high-stakes decisions about students should be based on the results of a standardized test. The decision whether to retain a student should be made by educators and parents with a detailed knowledge of the child's classwork and capabilities.

The test anxiety of all stakeholders throughout this whole process is palpable. Students are nervous, at eight years old, of failing an exam. Kids should be able to have fun and not worry about testing, especially if they fail. If they fail, they are asked to come to summer school and must work on concepts to pass or they must repeat third grade is harrowing. Parents become anxious because they are not sure as to what grade their child is in. District personnel and staff are unable to help kids immediately by placing them in the best environment because they are taking the test into June and July.

As a student, who himself had a reading disability because I could not talk until, I was four, I would have failed this test. I was not a poor reader, I had speech issues that impeded my growth. When they were corrected, in the fifth grade, I went up from the second grade reading level to at grade level by the end of the year and was able to take honors classes by High School. Student testing is not fair because it does not fairly measure our students and their ability to grow and learn.

Another reason I support the bill is because it will reduce the amount of state-mandated standardized testing we require of our students. The bill would limit the third grade ELA test to once a year, instead of the need to give it twice. This seems like a small thing, but as teachers we wish we had more time for classroom instruction rather than giving standardized tests.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. I urge your support for House Bill 497.

Sincerely,
Sean A. McCullough, M. Ed.
OEA Board of Directors: Central #3