



**House Primary and Secondary Education Committee
HB 497 Proponent Written testimony
By Melissa Cropper, Ohio Federation of Teachers
May 10, 2022**

Chair Manning, Vice-Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson, and Committee members, I am Melissa Cropper, president of the Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT) and a library media specialist. OFT represents teachers and paraprofessionals in rural and urban school districts, higher education faculty, and public employees. Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony on HB 497.

As a library media specialist, I know that reading skills are essential for a student's success. We support HB 497 because it maintains current reading intervention when needed but doesn't base those decisions on a single standardized test.

Teachers assess reading in grades K-3, and current law requires teachers to identify struggling readers early, inform parents, and provide appropriate intervention. Having proper assessment and intervention in those grades can help students succeed. However, using a standardized test as a determining factor in decisions to promote or retain students is not productive.

Retention or promotion is a serious decision that significantly impacts the student. Therefore, retention should not be based on a single test score. Teachers have access to more information and have a deeper understanding of a student's classwork and abilities. OFT prefers having teachers and parents make these decisions instead of a state mandate dictating what should happen.

A 2019, [Ohio State University study of Ohio's third-grade guarantee](#) supports our stance. It says, "Schools and teachers are the front-line implementers of the reading guarantee and as such, have valuable input as to what is and is not working well. Educators and school leaders should further offer meaningful tools to parents to support their young readers when they are deemed off track. This includes helping them understand the state's Kindergarten Readiness Assessment as well as any diagnostic or interim test data available to them."

OFT also supports having one administration of the third-grade English Language Arts assessment per year. Having the examination once a year will allow more time for students to improve their skills and lessen the stress on students.

OFT urges the committee to move HB 497. Thank you for considering our views.