

**House Primary & Secondary Education Committee Senate**  
**House Bill 583 Testimony**  
**David J. Brand, Superintendent**  
**North Olmsted City School District**  
**May 10, 2022**

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony to you today in support of House Bill (HB) 583. My name is David Brand and I am the Superintendent of North Olmsted City School District. Our district is located in Cuyahoga County. We have over 3,700 students. I am writing to you today in support of HB 583.

I am a proponent of HB 583. HB 583 permits a school district board of education to employ an individual as a substitute teacher according to the district's own educational requirements. Similar bills have been in place the last two school years and have successfully provided help for school districts.

We have been blessed to have low numbers of positive cases of COVID19 in our school district. We have been able to sustain 5-days per week of in-person learning all school year. The only reason we have even considered going to remote learning is due to a lack of substitute teachers. Therefore, substitute teachers are critical to keeping our students in school and safely learning. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, we were experiencing a shortage of certified classroom substitutes. Prior to this change in substitute teacher requirement, we have had a 20%+ decline in our substitute teacher pool resulting in fill rates of under 40%. Therefore we have been required to have available staff to cover for each other, this includes fellow teachers, principals, school counselors, and central office administrators including myself. It has also required us to combine classrooms to be supervised by one teacher and to have to eliminate critical specials (e.g. Art, Music, PE) so special area teachers can sub in regular classrooms.

The new substitute teaching requirements have allowed us to hire more substitutes and greatly improve our fill rates. We still have a substitute shortage, but it is much more manageable now. Most of our non-bachelor degree substitutes have become our most requested substitutes due to their ability to connect with students and desire to help.

Typically, a substitute must hold a bachelor's degree along with a substitute license issued by the Ohio Department of Education. HB 583 allows a local board of education to determine the requirements for substitutes that they will use. However, the bill specifies that a substitute teacher employed under the bill must be of good moral character, as prescribed for licensure, and must submit to a criminal records check and not have a record of disqualifying offenses for school employment, as required under continuing law. This allows for local control and for our district to screen and interview more candidates to determine if they would be a good fit to be a substitute teacher in our district. Often, we have found that those without a bachelor's degree are more qualified to be quality short-term substitute teachers due to their life experiences. HB 583 does not lower the expectation, in fact, it has allowed us to raise the quality of our substitute teacher pool.

As you consider this bill, there are a few items I would like you to consider. Other states have different requirements for a substitute license than Ohio. I think making a change to our requirements like I show below will dramatically help all schools and students without lowering our true standards. For example, in Indiana, a sub must hold a high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate, be 18 years of age or older, and meet the requirements set forth in the screening process of the school employer. In Illinois, a substitute teacher is required to hold an Associate's degree, and not a Bachelor's degree. In North Carolina, substitutes are not regulated by the state, allowing each district to determine the requirements for the subs they hire. I attained undergraduate school in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Their requirements are the completion of 90 semester hours. This helped both me as a pre-service teacher and also the school districts. I was able to substitute teach while going through school. This meant I was much more prepared for student teaching, job interviews, and my first job. With so many schools in remote learning or moving in and out of in-person learning, our current pre-service future teachers are not as prepared for their future careers as they typically would be. This Bill will help school districts and students immediately, and it will also help in the future.

A second item to note is how the use of technology has changed the role of the substitute. In North Olmsted City School and many other districts where each student has access to a Chromebook the teacher often records the lessons ahead of time and the students can access the lessons in the absence of the teacher. For some districts where a teacher is out ill or at home caring for an ill family member, the teacher is often still connecting with the class via Zoom or another virtual tool to provide instruction, but a substitute is needed to be physically present in the classroom with the students. In both of these situations, the substitute is monitoring the students and not providing actual instruction.

Thank you Representatives Bird and Jones for sponsoring this bill that is critical for all schools to have in place prior to the start of the 2022-23 school year. HB 583 would help to resolve substitute issues for school districts as we seek to deliver instruction in the most appropriate manner for our students and our communities.

I urge you to approve HB 583. Thank you for your time and attention. Feel free to reach out to me with any questions committee members might have.

Respectfully,



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