

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: 12/3/18

Name: ROB WINTON

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable): ROCKY RIVER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Position/Title: PRINCIPAL, ROCKY RIVER HIGH SCHOOL

Address: 20951 DETROIT ROAD, ROCKY RIVER, OH 44116

City: ROCKY RIVER State: OH Zip: 44114

Best Contact Telephone: 440-538-7887 Email: WINTON.ROB@RACS.ORG

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): HB 591

Specific Issue: STATE REPORT CARD & GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? 3-5 MINUTES

Please provide a brief statement on your position:

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED STATEMENT.

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.



Rocky River High School

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Rob Winton, Principal • Brian Gergely, Assistant Principal

Heath Horton, Assistant Principal • Mark Wagner, Director Athletics & Activities

Testimony for House Bill 591
House Education and Readiness Committee
December 4, 2018

Rob Winton
Rocky River High School
20951 Detroit Road
Rocky River, Ohio 44116

House Bill 591 (Committee) - School District Report Card Bill

Good afternoon Chairman Brenner and Committee Members. My name is Rob Winton and I am the principal at Rocky River High School in Rocky River, Ohio. I am also a board member for the Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators (OASSA - Zone 6 Director). The high school I represent is located in a middle class suburb west of Cleveland with approximately 850 students in grades 9-12.

I am here advocating for H.B. 591 as I believe the changes outlined in the bill would allow schools to be evaluated more effectively. Personally, I am a competitive individual, as are many of the district administrators I work with. Striving to do our best with the current report card requirements is something everyone on our staff works towards. We are constantly asking how to better ourselves along with what improvements need to be made at the district, building and classroom level.

During the 2016-2017 school year, our district ranked second in the state when comparing Performance Index scores. In 2017-2018 we dropped to sixth. To us, this was a sign that we needed to reevaluate our current practices in the classroom in order to implement changes that would allow us to improve in the future. With this process comes stress and anxiety, for administrator and teacher alike; but this process also develops reflection and an increased level of competition, both within our own district and those across the state who also perform at a high level. This type of competition, in my opinion, is healthy and leads to success.

With that said, I would like to highlight some particular areas of concern with the current report card measurements, specifically with how they impact at-risk students. The three pathways for graduation that exist are all excellent if you are a high achieving student. However, if you are a struggling at-risk kid (defined below) who have difficulty obtaining the 18 points on the Ohio State Tests, then receiving a remediation free score on the ACT or SAT, or obtaining a WorkKeys passing score is increasingly difficult.



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While I am very lucky to work in such a privileged district, the number of at-risk students and those who qualify for free and reduced lunch are increasing, and have been doing so over the past four years. These students often times come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, single parent households, work second shift jobs, have to care for their younger siblings, and have immigrated to the United States.

In order to get these students to graduate, they need take the Ohio State Tests multiple times. Without the alternative pathways that were available last year, getting these individuals across the proverbial finish line is a daunting task. In order to get them to pass, our teachers and support staff donate their own time tutoring them on their lunch and planning periods. If those efforts fail, we get creative and make changes to the students schedule, removing them from non-graduation electives and place them in structured study halls where they can review content that will be on the end of course exams. Many of these students thrive in electives such as music and art, and removing them from these classes takes away enjoyable parts of their day. Graduating trumps all other concerns, and providing remediation for these individuals throughout the day takes precedence over drawing, choir and other classes or experiences that support the growth of the entire individual.

This has resulted in an environment where students (example: Seniors who still need to pass ELA 1) are embarrassed to be testing among their younger peers, and has created a culture of students labeling themselves as 'one of the dumb kids who can't pass the test to graduate.' Besides diminishing student self-confidence, from a building and district point-of-view, we worry that retesting these students repeatedly will either ding our performance index score, our retest score or our graduation rate. With our teaching staff, it has resulted in some who don't want to have the so-called at-risk kids in their class due to the impact they will have on their OST scores and OTES evaluations. This is my issue to deal with as a building principal, not yours, but I wanted to paint a complete picture about the intended and unintended consequences that have resulted with current ODE protocols. Regardless of how the committee proceeds with H.B. 591, I am confident that Rocky River High School will continue to perform well. I do think that some of the recommended changes in the bill would alleviate a few of the stressors on staff and students allowing for there to be less of a focus on testing and more on providing students with an educational experience they deserve.

I would like to thank you for the time to speak before you today.

Sincerely,



Rob Winton



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