



EDUCATION  
COMMITTEE

Witness Form

Today's Date 11-6-17

Name: Diana L Savage

Address: 1350 Fountain Grove Dr

Bryan OH 43506

Telephone: 419-636-6973

Organization Representing Bryan City Schools

Testimony:  Verbal  Written  Both

Testifying As:  Proponent  Opponent  Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist?  Yes  No

Special Requests: \_\_\_\_\_

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Chair Lehner, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Education Committee, I am Diana Savage, Superintendent of the Bryan City School District in Williams County, and I testify today on Senate Bill 216 as introduced in the Senate.

Bryan City School District covers 69 square miles in Williams County and has an enrollment of just of 1900 students. Bryan is the largest school district in our county, and one of the largest in the NW four-county area of our state. BCS has repeatedly been recognized for our outstanding academics, arts and athletics, and we take great pride in providing a balanced experience for our students. In November, 2013, our community passed a bond issue to renovate our school facilities. In the past two years, we have opened two "new" buildings, and we now service all of our students on one campus for the first time in school history. Our buildings provide flexible learning spaces, state of the art technology, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environments for all.

For years, our school board and our administration have been dealt additional responsibilities, additional mandates, additional requirements, and each time, we have responded to meet those demands. However, as these mandates continue to multiply, our resources have become strained and we find it difficult to focus on our true goal – educating students. While this deregulation bill may not be the perfect answer, it is definitely a step in the right direction. Here are some of the benefits that our district could see as a result of its passage:

In the area of licensure –

Finding quality teacher candidates in our area is difficult. This is especially concentrated in the area of Intervention specialists and middle childhood certifications. For the past 6 years, I have had to sign off on supplemental teacher licensures to ensure that our district had the best people on staff. Allowing the teacher licensure tracks to consolidate, allowing district superintendents the right to waive licensure requirements for the right fit – would provide our district much needed flexibility in this area.

The substitute issue for both certified and classified staff is just as real. Recently our district had to enter into a bidding war and raise our substitute daily rates – just to find the coverage we need. Long term substitute candidates are even more difficult, especially with the current requirements. We utilize a 4 day/1 day system – just to be able to secure a person for our long-term positions.

Third grade reading guarantee -

No one, especially not me, can argue that having every child in Ohio read at a third grade level should be the expectation. Our district has consistently been above the discussed 80% passage rate; we have been near 95% passage. In spite of our success, we have had to send our teachers back for additional training in teaching reading and additional certifications. This additional work may have given our teachers more tools to use in the classroom. However, it did not impact our overall passage rates and came at an added cost to the district.

Finally – in regards to testing –

BCS would support the elimination of some of the grade level tests, especially at the elementary levels. Good teaching practice would guide you to analyze the data that you collect. At this point in time, BCS, and other teachers around the state are not able to analyze the data. We are not allowed to see the data. We are not allowed to see item analysis; we are not allowed to see actual test questions; practice test samples are 5 to 10 questions and are not helpful. State testing is guiding us to test online, yet, in 2016 those schools who tested online showed significant deficits when compared with schools who utilized pencil and paper. The stats tell the story better than I can, 85% of those schools who tested with paper and pencil received A's on value added, while only 17% of those schools who tested online received an A on value added.

Chairman, thank you again for this opportunity to express my views on Senate Bill 216, and I will be happy to address the committee's questions at the pleasure of the Chair.