

**Administration Office
& Board of Education**

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March 7, 2022

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson,
and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee,

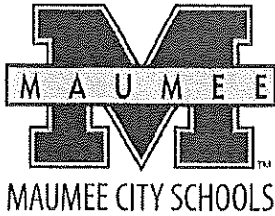
Thank you for reviewing this written testimony regarding House Bill (HB) 583. I am Todd Cramer, superintendent of Maumee City Schools. We are a suburban school district of 2300 students who are educated by 186 full time teachers located adjacent to the city of Toledo. I am writing you to testify in support of HB 583.

Like many school districts, securing substitute teachers has always been a challenge, one that has been exacerbated since the beginning of the pandemic. Given that this year there are over 5000 retirements anticipated by STRS and only around 2700 licensure eligible graduates in the field of education, I need you to support HB 583. Otherwise, the current pool of substitutes, one that based on the numbers I just shared will be shrinking, will be almost nonexistent in years to come.

The impact of not having enough substitute teachers is being felt across our state. While we are grateful to be able to provide in person instruction this school year, a shortage of substitutes has led us to pull staff hired and needed for other positions such as counselors, building administrators and central office staff to cover our classrooms. Staff have given up planning time, usually used to meet with individual students, contact parents and prepare future lessons, to ensure we have an adult in every classroom throughout the day. While this type of coverage happened occasionally before the pandemic, it has become a daily practice in most schools across NW Ohio. And honestly, we are the fortunate ones. We are located in a university rich area of the state with The University of Toledo, Bowling Green State University and Lourdes University located within 20 miles of our largest school districts. However, as I shared earlier, it is difficult to secure a resource that does not exist and this is where we are finding ourselves today.

During the 20-21 school year as well as the 21-22 school year temporary substitute flexibility helped our district. We were able to work with local universities and provide the opportunity for student teachers who were approved by both the university as well as the cooperating teacher the opportunity to sub in their building and be compensated for their work. Additionally, community members who lacked a four year degree stepped up to help our district stay open and provide in person instruction.

Should this bill not be approved, we will have a substantial challenge on our hands. Here are a few examples. We all know that beginning next year our staff need to engage in professional development focused on dyslexia. While I fully support job embedded professional development, and believe this training is important, it cannot take place without additional substitute teachers. Additionally, most districts pushed pause on curriculum adoptions during the height of COVID. We believed we needed staff physically present to explore, discuss and ask questions about materials before allocating valuable tax dollars to the purchase of materials. We are now needing to hold such meetings and move forward which will require release time for our staff through substitute teachers. The new state funding formula recognizes the need for professional development through the funding of 3 such days per teacher each year. For our district that is roughly 600 absences that need to be filled before a single staff member, staff member's child or perhaps a loved one is ill requiring a substitute to fill these absences. While I could go on, I believe these examples illustrate the need.



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Being married to an educator, I understand the stress classroom teachers have faced over the past 20 plus months. I have witnessed our teachers contemplate skipping funerals, well checks and other necessary appointments because they fear there will not be a substitute and they will put undue stress on a colleague who will need to cover their class. We have a tool to help alleviate this issue, one that has worked for the past 2 years, and it would be unwise not to use it.

If you are considering amending the bill, I would simply request you consider allowing university approved students teachers the opportunity to perform the duties of a substitute teacher for up to 10 days rather than the 5 proposed.

Thank you Representatives Bird and Jones for sponsoring the bill and expressing how important it is to have this bill become law before the 22-23 school year begins.

I urge you to approve HB 583. Thank you for your time and attention. I am happy to answer any questions committee members might have at this time.

Todd M. Cramer
Superintendent - Maumee City Schools