

Good afternoon, Chair Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram and members of the Senate Education Committee.

My name is Cynthia Sheets. I moved to Hilliard in 2010, seeking a new start and a better education for my child. At THAT time Hilliard City Schools was ranked "Excellent", so I felt confident when I enrolled my son. Throughout his academic career, I had few concerns. My son graduated in 2019, and while his time management skills for Football and Baseball were outstanding, based on the demands of his coaches and his desire to be an excellent athlete, he was missing academic time management skills and simple skills such as, how to fill out an envelope, even while graduating with a 3.8. His first year at ODU was eye opening. Due dates and content were issues, as these things were not a priority at Davidson HS. He was unprepared for the challenge of a private Catholic College and the expectations, he would face. He has not finished his college education and because he was not prepared, is partly the fault of HCSD.

Fast forward to the current environment of our schools. I believe things have gotten progressively worse, for parents and students. Few public schools are focused on academic excellence. Many schools are no longer focused on the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. Phonics seems to have disappeared.

We have school curriculums, inclusive of HCSD, focused on turning students into social activists. Those activists, while no longer learning cursive, will not be able to read the Nation's founding documents. Schools are so focused on Social Emotional Learning, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Critical Race Theory, actual academics have been sidelined.

Activist teachers are no longer hiding their agendas. The rights of conservative parents are being disrespected and trampled upon. If parents do not agree, with the current agenda, they are called hateful names such as "Extremist, Nazi Homophobes", simply for wanting the schools to focus on academics and the expectation of parents being notified of any mental health concerns, for their children.

Beyond any social educational concerns, there must be options for parents to choose traditional education, where the focus is academic excellence. We are failing the children of Ohio.

With 40% of Ohio 3rd graders not reading at grade level, there are clearly issues that need to be addressed. Even HCSD's report card shows, four performance indicators in the 50's, multiple in the 60's, seven in the 70's and two in the 80's. There's is not one performance indicator in the 90's. We are failing the children of Hilliard and Ohio.

School choice makes sense, for a multitude of reasons. Those parents who are seeking a traditional education, with the focus on academic excellence, must be afforded this opportunity.

For these reasons, I support SB 11 and you should also.

Thank you.
Cynthia Sheets