

Lauren Moore - HB1008 Testimony
Indiana House Education Committee
1/9/2019

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of this committee for allowing me an opportunity to speak in support of House Bill 1008. My name is Lauren Moore and I am a special education teacher at West Goshen Elementary School in Goshen, Indiana and a Teach Plus Indiana Teaching Policy Fellow.

Since becoming an educator twelve years ago, I have been fortunate to have several mentors who have pushed my thinking, my craft, and my love for learning. Some of these mentors were formally assigned as part of a new teacher program and others were acquired over time through professional relationships and my desire to give students my best. My story is one of hope and success.

It is because of these mentors that I am still teaching today. They saw potential in me during my formative teaching years, helped me learn to reflect on student needs, and pushed me to try new instructional practices. Ruth was one such mentor. I was struggling with how to teach 6 year olds how to write creatively. I wasn't convinced it could be done. Through several sessions of analyzing student actions and planning together, Ruth showed me the potential even six year olds have for sharing their ideas and thoughts. Ruth is still a valuable part of my teaching career to this day.

Sadly, most teachers do not have opportunities to be mentored. In truth, many teachers today feel alone, unsupported, and overwhelmed. For my school, mentoring was where hope and success began.

Eight years ago, my district voted to adopt The System for Teacher and Student Advancement, known as the TAP system. I realized this was my chance to give back. Because I wanted to pay forward the kind of guidance I had received, I became a mentor teacher in my building. Now in addition to helping others improve their practice, I am also able to continue growing as a professional, developing my skills, honing my instruction, and being compensated for the additional responsibilities I accepted as a part of this role.

One of the most powerful mentoring experiences I've had is with a transition to teaching candidate. This teacher brought successful life experience and great ideas to his students, but something was missing. After a few years he became discouraged and considered leaving the teaching profession completely. I was able to come alongside this teacher and over the past two years, Ryan and I have met weekly to analyze student data, discuss instructional practices, and tighten up student management. I visit his room regularly to watch him and his students in action, all the while working together for student success. Ryan is still teaching third grade and his students are continually showing growth.

These types of mentoring relationships are now the norm in my building. Because of the focus on mentorship and opportunities for teacher growth in leadership, teachers and students alike are experiencing more success than ever before. I said this was a story of hope and success and I mean it. Because of our mentoring structure, through TAP, our students have earned our school an A letter grade for the past 3 years. Before implementing this career ladder structure we were a D school.

HB 1008 is an exciting opportunity to begin allowing other teachers to experience career ladders and mentoring in schools across our state. Creating a funded pilot grant program would allow teachers to experience leadership, other teachers to receive support, and ultimately for students to benefit from both. I urge you to support and fund House Bill 1008 so that all teachers might have the same opportunities to grow as professionals through career ladders and mentorship. I want to thank Rep. Behning for authoring this bill. Thank you.