

March 4, 2025

To: House Public Education Committee

Re: House Bill 2

Position: On

Honorable Chair Buckley, Vice Chair Bernal and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kailey Lambert. I am currently a 2nd grade teacher at Greathouse Elementary in Midland ISD, now in my third year as a teacher of record. During the 2021-2022 school year, I completed a paid, yearlong residency program through a partnership between Ector County ISD and the University of Texas Permian Basin.

My paid, yearlong residency prepared me with the skills to be a successful teacher and career educator. I gained practical strategies to use in my classroom while earning a stipend to support myself while completing my degree and certification. Under the supervision and guidance of Karen Vicory, a highly qualified mentor with demonstrated effectiveness in the classroom, I got to learn while having the safety net to make mistakes without damaging students' academic experience. I benefited from a year's worth of hands-on experience while receiving quality feedback and developing confidence in my own teaching. For example, I was really nervous about classroom management going into my residency. Observing effective veteran educators allowed me to take away strategies such as logical consequences that I put in place during my first year as a teacher of record. Because of the support I had and the techniques I picked up, I didn't feel like a first-year teacher going into my first year as a teacher of record. I felt like a veteran.

Without the stipend that I received through the teacher residency program, there is no way I would have been able to solely focus on my preparation to become an educator. The stipend not only allowed me to support myself financially but it allowed me to invest in my development as a teacher. Without the stipend I would have had to work outside jobs in order to pay for my education. Opportunities to earn and learn - like the one I had - are desperately needed to attract more candidates to enter into high-quality programs that can help them become successful educators and stay in the profession.

Even in my third year teaching, I see the impact of my rigorous and intensive preparation more than ever. I have more confidence in the classroom and am able to provide impactful instruction to help my students meet their goals in reading and math. With 80% of my students testing at or above grade level in reading proficiency, I attribute their tremendous growth to the skills I gained during my preparation, especially with planning and tailoring my instruction based on data showing the learning needs of my students.

I also believe that the teacher residency program has contributed to me wanting to stay in the classroom to impact students' learning for years to come. In the future, I see myself giving back to the preparation program that benefited me by helping to coach aspiring and early career teachers to be successful educators.

On behalf of other current and former teacher candidates, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. As you consider House Bill 2, I urge you to make high-quality educator preparation programs more attractive and accessible to future generations of Texas teachers.

Sincerely,

Kailey Lambert
2nd Grade Teacher, Midland ISD
Teacher Residency Completer, UT Permian Basin