

To the Members of the House Education Committee,

I am the mother of an energetic, hilarious, and eager-to-learn kindergartener. For no reason other than he wanted to go (I am a stay-home parent), we held the privilege of involvement in pre-K since age two and he has always been an enthusiastic player in his classroom, excited to go and proud of any and every accomplishment.

We began this fall in full day kinder at our neighborhood school, and in four months I have watched him diminish from that boy I've always known to an almost sullen archetype of a kid dragging his feet in the morning, complaining he just wants to stay home.

At two months into the school year, my husband and I nervously drove to the school for our very first parent/teacher conference. We sat in front of our son's teacher expecting her to tell us about who he is when we aren't around, how his social and moral compass are developing, if he was happy, enjoying things. Instead I was unsettled to be immediately shown a list of scores he had scored on letters, letter sounds, etc. (to note: he bombed. My early reader bombed letter recognition because he was nervous, uncomfortable, confused at the testing.)

I left feeling like he didn't matter, just his numbers. I wondered if he felt that way also.

I've since made myself very present in the classroom in an attempt to pin down WHY things felt so off, so mechanical. Rushed. I know we have a skilled teacher and I love our schools mission and moral integrity. What I have witnessed is a lack of power and creative autonomy in our lovely teacher, an obscene pace and workload, a pile of backwards priorities.

These kids are small. I am watching their natural passion for learning and interaction become smothered, discarded. I support HB 2318 as wholly as I support a future filled with empathetic, problem solving, supported human beings and, with any conscience, I expect you to, also.

Regards,

Johanna Aley, Mother
(541) 510-8357
jo.schroeder@hotmail.com