

Oral testimony relative to Senate Substitute for House Number 4059 (Critical Shortage Bill) presented October 7, 2015 by Franklin D. Polzin, M. S., CCC-SLP to the Senate Education Committee.

I urge this committee to support the Senate Substitute for House Bill Number 4059 and recommend its passage to the Senate.

I am a retired speech and language pathologist having worked for Saginaw Public Schools for 40 years and for the Saginaw Intermediate School District for 2 years previous to the SPS employment. I retired as of June 30, 2012 and have contracted back to SPS parts of these past 3 school years.

Saginaw Public Schools has had difficulty recruiting and retaining speech and language pathologists. This past school year (2014-15) SPS hired 5 retired SLP's to service its students. Saginaw teachers accepted a 3% pay cut in the 2013-14 school year and another 6% pay cut in the 2014-15 school year. Prior to the 2013-14 school year, Saginaw teachers had not received a pay raise or step increase for several years. The above pay cuts were implemented as part of the Deficit Elimination Plan for Saginaw Public Schools required by the Michigan Department of Education. SPS had two new SLP's last year. One left mid-year after accepting more lucrative employment in another city. The other had a 90 mile commute and was looking for employment closer to home possibly anticipating some SLP retirements. Saginaw lost two additional "one-year" SLP's who had worked for SPS during the 2012-13 school year. One took a position with a neighboring ISD and received a \$10,000 raise. The other took a 9/10's position closer to her home and received a \$5,000 raise. SPS is a high needs school district and seems to have difficulty offering competitive compensation to new SLP's. Other urban school districts may be having similar difficulties.

My retired colleagues and I provided needed important services for SPS students. Since the sunset of the previous Critical Shortage Bill, my colleagues and I have had to stop serving students when we earn 1/3 of our Final Average Compensation due to current Office of Retirement Services rules. Through May 8, 2015, I was working full time for SPS serving two high needs schools with a caseload of 73 at one time. My students were not serviced from 5-8-15 to the end of the school year. A retired colleague reached her 1/3 FAC a few days after I did. She was serving 41 students. A third colleague serving 1 school will reach her 1/3 FAC sometime in October, 2015. A friend of mine in Laingsburg reached her 1/3 FAC just after spring break. A substitute teacher finished the school year.

I understand Saginaw contracted through the Saginaw ISD for the 2015-16 school year and was hoping as of last week to have enough SLP's in place to cover all of their students. That will be a wonderful thing. I believe the Saginaw ISD was able to offer more competitive compensation, although I do not have a current salary schedule to support that belief.

This Critical Shortage Bill offers a "back-up" plan to school districts unable to recruit and retain new speech and language pathologists by reemploying their retired SLP's. I urge this committee to recommend passage of the Senate Substitute for House Bill 4059. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


