

# CLINTON CITY SCHOOL SYSTEM

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## CLINTON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION RESOLUTION SUPPORTING AMENDING T.C.A. 49-6-3115 TO ALLOW TENNESSEE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS AUTONOMY TO MAKE RETENTION DECISIONS FOR THEIR THIRD AND FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS

**WHEREAS**, the Clinton City School District Board of Education is charged with governing the school district so all Clinton students receive the best educational opportunities to create well-rounded, productive citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, during its 2021 first extraordinary session, the Tennessee General Assembly adopted Public Chapter 1, now codified as T.C.A. 49-6-3115, which provides in pertinent part that, “Beginning with the 2022-23 school year, a student in third-grade shall not be promoted to the next grade level unless the student is determined to be proficient in English Language Arts (ELA) based on the student achieving a performance level rating of “on track” or “mastered” on the ELA portion of the student’s most recent Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) test”, and

**WHEREAS**, T.C.A. 49-6-3115 uses only one piece of data to make crucial and life-altering retention decisions for most third-grade Tennessee students, while also allowing for retention exemptions for English Language Learner (ELL) students, special education students, any students suspected of having a disability, formerly retained students, students who attend summer school, and/or students participating in a year-long All Corps tutoring program; and

**WHEREAS**, many parents across the State of Tennessee have already started expressing their fears and concerns over the implementation of T.C.A. 49-6-3115, with one such parent recently stating to a news outlet:

- “I was devastated when I read it. As a mother, it was such a disheartening thing to read that this is going to be something that could impact my child and thousands and thousands of children.”<sup>1</sup>

**WHEREAS**, the Tennessee General Assembly has made it apparent that parents should possess a strong voice in their child’s education through privatization efforts, including vouchers and charter schools, but that very same General Assembly has not provided Tennessee parents the same authority with retention decisions, and

**WHEREAS**, the wording and implementation of T.C.A. 49-6-3115 also stands to create further academic gaps between underserved subgroups; and

**WHEREAS**, Tennessee State Board of Education policy notes that, “Retention shall be considered only when it is the best interest of the student,” and

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<sup>1</sup> WKRN story found online at: <https://www.wkrn.com/news/local-news/murfreesboro/tennessee-parents-voice-concerns-about-states-3rd-grade-retention-law/>.

**WHEREAS**, the Clinton City School District has traditionally and effectively utilized multiple sources of data to make instructional decisions, including retention decisions, regarding all students, no matter their socioeconomic, racial, or other backgrounds; and

**WHEREAS**, the Clinton City School District – like many other public school systems across this great State – follows research based best practice strategies cultivated by Dr. John Hattie, a widely renowned education researcher, which shows grade level retention often has a significantly detrimental effect on a child ( -32 size effect, with .4 being considered the “zone of desired effects”); and

**WHEREAS**, the Clinton City School District firmly believes that our parents have strong voices regarding their child’s educational path, and should still be granted input regarding retention decisions; and

**WHEREAS**, no law similar to T.C.A. 49-6-3115 has proven to show long-term success in other states, often requiring those other states to amend similar legislation to include provisions allowing local school districts the power to promote students who were not proficient in ELA as measured by standardized state tests, but who also showed progress based on other relevant school district data, thus demonstrating an understanding of ELA via alternative and reliable knowledge assessments.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Clinton City Schools Board of Education urges the Tennessee General Assembly to amend T.C.A 49-6-3115 to allow local school districts like ours to make grade level retention decisions for all students based upon the totality of data, discussion among stakeholders, the expertise of education professionals, and parental input regarding the best interests of each child.



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Dr. Tim Bible, Chairman



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Merle Pryse, Vice Chair




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Joey Smith, Member



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Curtis Isabell



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David Queener



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Lorie Wilson