

Members of the Senate Education Committee,

Annie is now 7 years old. I first met her a couple of years ago when she was five and I was a volunteer in her preschool. She is a child full of curiosity and joy who came to school each day full of self-confidence and ready to learn new things.

At the end of her last year in preschool, she looked forward to kindergarten in the fall. Fall came and so did the standardized testing. "Annie needs extra practice for the test", her teacher said. "She can do that during recess and then retake the test."

Annie no longer goes to public school. Her parents, aware that their daughter felt ashamed and hurt because she failed the test, made the difficult decision to homeschool her.

I have been a retired teacher for nearly a decade, but not without keeping a critical eye on the state of our public schools. I have watched the dulling effects of a corporate-driven curriculum, accompanied by the layering of standardized test after test on our kids.

I have watched elementary school teachers--required to teach to the test--struggle to find time in the day to read a story to their students, fearful of reprisal if they fail to prepare their students adequately for the tests. I have watched parents, dismayed by the number of standardized tests their kids are taking, feeling left out of the picture, not knowing where to get answers to their questions. I have watched bright, creative kids like Annie, stop loving school.

It doesn't have to be like this. Please support the "Too Young to Test" bill (SB 596).

Sincerely,  
Katherine Gorham  
Retired middle school teacher