

House Committee on Education 2/09/15

Testimony of Dr. Rex Hagans on [HB 2680](#) “Prohibits use of results of statewide summative assessment developed by state-led consortium to establish summative ratings of schools or to make summative evaluations of teachers or administrators”

Chair Doherty, Vice-Chair Frederick, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Rex Hagans. I live in the Canby School District. I received my PhD in Education from the University of Iowa, studying with many of the testing professionals who developed and have marketed some of the most widely used standardized tests in the nation, including Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the American College Testing program (ACT). I then spent 30 years working in Educational Research and Development, during which time I worked very closely with many nationally recognized experts in the field of testing. I also have been a very close student of the debate about the development and use of the so-called “SBAC” tests which are about to be administered to over 300,000 Oregon kids.

I am here today to tell you that [HB 2680](#) is a flawed bill, because it fails to declare a moratorium on the administration of the badly flawed Smarter, Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) tests.

In 2011, 49 states, Oregon among them, signed on to the development of the so-called “Common Core” standards for K-12 Education. Immediately, two Consortia of states began develop tests for use in implementing the Common Core; The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) Each of the 49 states belonged to one or the other of these Consortia.

Since that time, 20 of the states have withdrawn from this massive test development effort, almost all of them because of serious questions about the appropriateness of these new tests for their children. Last spring, the Representative Assembly of the OEA called for a moratorium on these tests here in Oregon. Yet somehow, HB2680 makes no mention of suspending the tests themselves, but only calls for suspending their use for purposes of evaluating teachers and ranking schools.

Last November, The Smarter, Balanced Testing Consortium announced that they anticipate two-thirds of students taking the test next year will fall below proficiency in mathematics, while nearly six in 10 will fail to measure up in English. Oregon DOE officials are on record as saying they expect those numbers to hold in Oregon. Poor results hammer students’ self-confidence and disengage them from learning. So while we are hearing today about the need for Parents to be able to opt their kids out of these tests to protect them, we have here a bill that ignores the call by teachers to suspend the tests themselves, at least until serious questions about them are answered? We are told that the upcoming administration of the SBAC is a “pilot test.” 300,000 kids are a pilot test? If this were being paid for by Federal dollars, I believe that informed consent (from parents) would be required before a pilot test is given.

So we are going to ignore the potential damage of the SBAC to our kids in order to “move toward better assessment practices?” But we are going to “postpone” the use of the SBAC to judge teachers and schools? Really? The SBAC is good enough to inflict on 300,000 kids, but not good enough to use for judging teachers and schools?

I urge the Committee to consider the potential outrage from parents when the SBAC results hit the streets. Do you want to be on record as ignoring what was 100% predictable? Or would you rather amend this bill to call for a halt in the testing itself and deal with the messiness that will undoubtedly create for the bureaucracy?