

Members of the House Education Committee,

I believe that this week's Portland Public Schools Board of Education meeting (2/17/15) is one of the most consequential I have seen. I especially invite you to watch the beginning with testimony from PAT President, Gwen Sullivan, followed by teachers and parents. You may also be interested in testimony by Dr. Rick Stiggins and Gwen Sullivan on the progress of assessment work groups further into the meeting. (A link for your convenience):

<http://www.pps.k12.or.us/departments/tv-services/6442.htm>

Whether or not you are willing to take as strong a stand against the SBAC as I have below, I urge you to at the very least delay administration of this test, scheduled to begin in the next few weeks, pending the validation of the test and the results of the various assessment and teacher evaluation work groups now meeting around the state.

I hope you come to realize, if you haven't already, that in this case, teachers are NOT being fearful about SBAC for no reason. PAT President, Gwen Sullivan is right to testify that for a portion of our school population, taking this test, even once, will be tantamount to child abuse. This statement is congruent with the Child Abuse Prevention Training (CAPT) that we are required to take yearly.

I know that you are an education supporter, so I am hoping that your critical thinking skills allow you to fully appreciate that:

- 1) If education is what remains when that which was learned has been forgotten, this test is the equivalent of judging bodybuilders or professional athletes by gathering data on their workouts.
- 2) There is no research that shows that any CCSS-referenced test is actually an effective measure of students' subject competence, but there is research that shows that this test is developmentally inappropriate, culturally and linguistically biased, and has not been validated.
- 3) The test is an unconscionable drain on the already inadequate education resources available—especially in Oregon, a state already at the bottom of the pack in graduation rates and at the top in class size.
- 4) The opportunity cost of preparing for and taking the test is at least as egregious as the monetary cost.
- 5) The psychological damage done by giving a test that two out of three students will fail is more than “significant.”
- 6) The test is of little to no benefit to students and teachers; the results will not be available in time to affect students' grades, instruction, or curriculum.
- 7) The test is likely to be a detriment as it is used to justify further weakening of teaching—especially to those who are historically badly served by our education system.

Given these facts, which are in little dispute among teachers and other professional educators, and controversial only among those who do not understand who shows up in our classrooms and what happens there, including so-called experts who do not teach children, there is only one responsible course of action...

The Oregon Legislature must join with teachers, administrators, parents, and the organizations that represent us, and courageously oppose testing—starting NOW. I would love to see Portland Public Schools be one of the first school systems in the nation to refuse to give these useless and harmful tests, but you have the power to save the entire state from this tragedy.

Thank you for your time and attention,

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