

March 3, 2015

Dear Members of the House Committee on Education:

I am writing to express my support for much of HB 2680, but I have a strong reservation. I would recommend a complete stop and/or pause of any SBAC testing until further notice as it is expensive, a waste of instructional time, and simply does not inform my instruction as a teacher.

I am a Language Arts and Social Studies teacher at a high poverty middle school. The SBAC roll out has been a disaster with much wasted instructional time. Testing is taking too long, isn't informing our instruction, encourages spending time teaching to the test, and our technology will not support it school-wide. Teachers are trained professionals who know how to assess students in an authentic way. Trust us do our job rather than a testing company who seeks profit. Currently, there are no checks and balances for this test as teachers, principals, and parents cannot question the test or check to see whether or not it is valid or appropriate. I am looking to my legislators to strongly question the use, validity, and cost of this test.

While this bill protects teachers and schools, it does not protect our students from hours of a dismal, developmentally inappropriate, and inauthentic assessment experience. That time and money can be better spent with more joyful and meaningful learning and assessment in the classroom.

Furthermore, Oregon does not need to use the SBAC to meet NCLB Waiver requirement and should question this federal requirement and seek more appropriate and less intrusive alternatives such as the NAEP or an authentic state developed assessment such as work samples or portfolios.

Finally, you might hear that we need more data to show these tests are valid or not valid, but this is not only a waste of time and money, but also a drain on our joy for teaching and learning. We can and must do better, and the sooner we get the SBAC out of the way, the faster we can relieve stress and get back to authentic teaching and learning.

Time to put high-stakes testing to a halt so we as a state can take our time to evaluate what is truly best for our students.

Respectfully,

Tricia Snyder
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Co-founder of Oregon Save Our Schools

Public school teacher

Parent of two public middle school students who are opting out of SBAC