

Dear House Education Committee,

My name is Andrew Duden. I am both a teacher of in the Lake Oswego School District and a parent of two students in Portland Public Schools. I am writing to support the passage of HB 2713.

The reason I support HB 2713 is that the bill seeks to allow our state to ask critical questions about the current Smarter Balanced assessments. As a teacher, the Smarter Balanced consortium remains a mysterious organization about which administrators, parents, teachers and students know very little. I experienced this year much confusion and frustration from my administrators in their effort to deliver transparent, honest information about the design and the method of evaluation for these tests. My colleagues and I are left with a collective sense of ennui as we make a morose jump through a bureaucratic hoop.

The Smarter Balanced consortium may argue that they provide transparency. All one has to do is go on their easy to access website. However, I think we can all agree that there is a much greater degree of transparency for students and parents when they can discuss openly and honestly with their classroom teacher an assessment method organic to that teacher. The Smarter Balanced consortium cannot provide that level of clarity, honesty, and scrutiny. If the goal of the Oregon State Board of Education is to provide the best education possible to our students, then we should devote resources to providing teachers in classrooms opportunities to work collaboratively with their colleagues to develop the best curriculum possible devoid of any limitations placed upon them by some external, hostile test like a Smarter Balanced assessment.

As a parent and citizen, I find the Smarter Balanced assessment a waste of precious, limited public funds for education. When I received my daughters OAKS test scores, in no way did I feel fulfilled and enlightened about my daughters academic progress. I already intend to opt my children out of these assessments because I know they do not contribute to best practice for educators, nor do they provide parents any meaningful insight into the intellectual growth of their children.

HB 2713 will at least allow Oregon to carefully examine the worth of this enterprise in a pragmatic manner. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony.

Sincerely,

Andrew Duden
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