

Chair Doherty and Members of the House Education Committee,

I am writing in support of HB 2713. I am a veteran high school history teacher (21 years) and the president of my local teachers' association. I am also the parent of two Portland public school graduates. As a parent, I am deeply grateful that my sons (now in their twenties) have escaped the worst excesses of the recent education reforms (though the entirety of their education was in the wake of Ballot Measure 5 and its defunding mechanism.)

I am very grateful that current legislators in Salem are taking a hard look at the boondoggle of the testing regime being foisted upon schools. And, I am appreciative that Rep. Frederick's bill reveals his understanding of the multiplicity of "costs" (beyond financial) to schools. HB 2713 enables educators to collaborate with their administrators to educate the ODE about the damaging impacts of the testing mandates.

My high school has spent countless precious human hours attempting to lessen the impact of pulling students out of class for the testing this spring. First off, leaders have lost hours in meetings and communications and then lost time again in more meetings as our original plans could not be implemented due to an ODE rule requiring the completion of 80% of the coursework before the test rolls out. This inflexibility squeezes the testing into a tiny window between AP tests (which are more meaningful to both students and teachers, not to mention, colleges) and local final exams (which, in my school, are meaningful cumulative presentation projects.) Math and English teachers will have to waste their last opportunity for professional development this spring being trained to proctor the tests. Teachers in elementary schools are taking instructional time to do practice tests. Middle and High School teachers are already sacrificing curriculum to make room for the tests.

Is this really what we want for education?

And then there is the technology requirement (a burden to both students and schools) and the inequities that result from that. We all know there are kids who own lots of technology and are technologically proficient and also those who neither own technology nor are comfortable testing on it.

Professor Yong Zhao (***Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Dragon? Why China has the Best (and Worst) Education System in the World***), has repeatedly warned the American education community against an excessive fondness of national standardized testing. According to Zhao, such tests promote compliance and conformity, not creativity. Nor are they able, in any way, to reveal student potential. And, he warns us, testing, in China, serves to perpetuate authoritarian regimes. They are not appropriate for democracies. That's a cost with huge implications.

Students, parents and teachers all over America are participating in the democratic process by speaking out and opting out of these tests. I am proud to witness such political action and I welcome the opportunity to help my district educate the Department of Education about the true meaning of learning.

Sincerely,

Laura Paxson Kluthe

Lake Oswego Education Association

