

Dear House Education Committee members,

I am a 35 year veteran of teaching in our public schools. I am writing to ask you to support House Bill 2655. Currently, I teach English as a Second Language at Franklin High School in southeast Portland. My immigrant students will be taking the Smarter Balanced assessment in May. This test will not give me results I can use to plan instruction for them. It will, however, deprive my students of valuable hours of instructional time that would be better spent in my classroom, learning the grammar and vocabulary they need to pass the general education classes they are required to take to earn their high school diplomas.

I believe the Smarter Balanced Assessment will also leave them frustrated and discouraged. Last week they already lost several hours of instructional time taking the state-mandated English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA). Over this last decade of my career, I have seen my students' time in the classroom increasingly co-opted by mandated testing to the point where they dread testing. What really saddens me is that my students, many of whom come from parts of the world where they did not have access to a free and public education, are youngsters who really, really want to take advantage of what public schools can offer in this country. House Bill 2655 will help bring common sense back into the public schools. House Bill 2655 will give parents and students information they should already be receiving about the testing being conducted in our schools. If my children were still school-age, I would not let them take the Smarter Balanced Assessment. I have studied the issue and I am thoroughly convinced that this assessment will do more harm than good for my students. Please, please, support House Bill 2655.

Respectfully,
Alice Weinstein