

Testimony to Oregon House Education Committee
March 16, 2015

My name is Laura Umiger, and I am a teacher in Beaverton School District as well as a parent of two children in the same district. I am asking you to support HB2655 as this will provide parents with balanced information regarding the Smarter Balanced Assessment and will allow them to advocate for their children by opting out, if they choose.

As an educator, I am well informed of the benefits and costs associated with high stakes standardized testing. I understand exactly how this data is utilized by the district and what amount of class time is needed to prepare for this assessment. For most parents, this is not transparent. They do not understand how the SBAC differs from OAKS, nor are they aware of how this data does (or does not) inform instruction of their child. They do not know what is on the test or what skills their child is being evaluated on. We need to provide all of this information to parents and families so that they can make educated decisions on behalf of their children.

It is because of my knowledge as an educator that my husband and I have chosen to opt out our own children. However, this wasn't a simple task. Our initial request was denied, as we used the word "belief" in lieu of religion. We have researched this topic in depth and recognize that SBAC is an invalid measure of teacher and school performance, is not utilized to guide instruction of our children, wastes valuable days and weeks of instructional time, is developmentally inappropriate and places an inordinate amount of stress on children, specifically those in Title one buildings. Yet, our official reason for opting out was "religion", as this was our only choice. This is wrong.

Our education system has been in reform for nearly 20 years with high stakes standardized testing, and we have yet to see the benefit of these reforms. It is time to recognize that this is not the path to "college and career readiness" for our children, and HB2655 is a step in the right direction.

Thank you,

Laura Umiger
14333 SW Walnut Lane
Tigard, OR 97223