

To: House Committee on Education

From: Stephanie Feeney Ph.D, Professor Emerita of Education

Re: HB 2318 — Prohibiting Standardized Testing from Pre-K to 2nd Grade

I am Stephanie Feeney, Professor Emerita of early childhood education, testifying as a private citizen independent of any organization. I am writing in support of HB 2318 which prohibits the Oregon State Board of Education from requiring school districts to administer certain standardized assessments to students enrolled in prekindergarten through grade two.

There are two primary educational purposes for standardized testing. The first is to inform instruction; the second is to provide information about program effectiveness for administrators and policy makers. Standardized testing to accomplish the first of these purposes is unnecessary. Teachers of young children can get all of the information they need to inform instruction from observing children, looking at samples of their work and developing classroom-based assessments to determine the effectiveness of their teaching.

Using standardized tests to determine program effectiveness is unwarranted for the following reasons:

- Standardized tests do not accurately evaluate what young children know and can do because children often lack skills needed for test-taking and tend to respond differently on any given day. This means that the tests results are often not valid or reliable.
- Tests typically measure isolated skills and miss objectives considered important in children's development like comprehension, higher-level thinking and problem solving.
- Standardized tests can lead to narrowing of the curriculum and curtailment of recess, play, story reading, art, music, movement and other activities that are essential to development and that promote creative thinking and problem solving.
- Standardized testing may lead teachers to introduce skills too early or alter their curriculum to "teach to the test," resulting in inappropriate teaching methods and content.
- Testing can have a negative impact on young children who may experience stress, anxiety, and a sense of incompetence during a test.
- Standardized tests may be culturally biased and inappropriate for children who do not speak English as their first language.
- Emphasis on academic skills that are to be tested can result in pressure on families and preschools to teach content that is not appropriate for young children.
- Data from tests may not reach teachers in time to inform instruction or may be used in ways that are not beneficial to children.

Standardized testing of young children has many potential risks and no demonstrable benefits. The Code of Ethics of the National Association for the Education of Young Children states that assessment practices should have the potential to benefit children. I urge legislators in Oregon to support HB 2318 and only support assessment practices that provide tangible benefits to young children.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.



Stephanie Feeney

