

Feb. 1, 2019

To Members of the House Education Committee:

Please support HB 2318 ("Too Young to Test").

I am an educator with more than 40 years of experience. For 31 years I worked mainly with first and second graders in public schools. Later I taught literacy methods courses for graduate students in the licensure program at Portland State University's Graduate School of Education, now the College of Education. I know from reading, research, and my experience teaching hundreds of young children that standardized testing in this age group yields no information that is useful for teaching or learning. Standardized testing of young children results in anxiety, and the data are unreliable because of developmental characteristics of their brains. Often, children are expected to use unfamiliar technology to testing, and this significantly limits the validity of the results.

Instead teachers should use their time with students to observe and assess them in normal classroom tasks. (The bill continues to permit the use of standardized assessments for purely diagnostic purposes.) The best assessment for literacy development, for example, is examining stories and informational writing that children compose, listening to them read real books, and talking with them about what they understand.

An important limitation of standardized testing is that the results are delayed for weeks or months. To make good use of academic time in the classroom and to be responsive to individual learning needs, teachers need insights in real time that they can use both in the moment and in short term planning for the next days and weeks.

Standardized testing for young children is unreliable and doesn't really measure what it says it measures. The results gained are worthless, and the funds wasted on these would be much better spent on smaller class sizes, libraries, and books.

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