



February 1, 2019

Chair Dougherty and Members of the House Education Committee,

We are writing on behalf of Tigard-Tualatin School District in opposition to House Bill 2318 as currently drafted.

This bill, which bans any common assessments for PreK through 2nd grade, will place significant barriers on our ability to deliver high-quality instruction to our students. To plan effective instruction, it is essential to know each individual child's strengths and areas of growth. Without regular formative assessments, it is not possible for our teachers to know which students are successfully learning the curriculum material and those who may need more help. This would result in a "one-size fits all" learning environment in which many students may be left behind.

Tigard-Tualatin School District has instituted a successful data-driven approach that identifies students who may need additional support early allowing educators to provide appropriate intervention. Early intervention in all areas, especially literacy and communication are critical and fundamental to student success. Without the ability to assess student learning, we run the risk of having students fall far behind in foundational skills. The damaging results of this ban would have a significant impact on student success to include students being misidentified for Special Education services, underperforming on critical 3rd grade benchmarks that will affect their learning continuum and ultimately higher dropout rates. Eliminating common assessments would erase the progress we have made towards ensuring that all students have the tools they need to be successful in school and to thrive.

Tigard-Tualatin has a long and storied history of accurately using Response to Intervention to identify our students in need of extra support. This helps us differentiate students who are truly learning disabled versus those who have developmental and academic gaps due to life circumstance which can be addressed in the classroom through effective instruction. We know that during the critical developmental period of birth to five and the subsequent early education years of PreK to 2nd grade, children are growing both developmentally and cognitively. This is a critical time for academic growth and the optimal time to identify which students have needs, what those needs are, and to target and provide effective learning supports.

Ongoing assessment information is vital for us to know if our instructional practices are effective. Perhaps most importantly, it helps us identify which students or student groups may be being left behind and where we need to focus our efforts--critical to closing our achievement gaps. In our ongoing quest to improve outcomes for all students, it is essential that we are able to utilize data to hold ourselves accountable for student learning.

We believe that Oregon can and should make improvements in our assessment practices for young children. However, wholesale elimination of assessments is not the answer and will penalize our most vulnerable students.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sue Rieke Smith - Superintendent  
Karen Twain - Superintendent  
Jill Zurschmeide - School Board Chair  
Todd Robson - Director of Teaching and Learning  
Carol Kinch - Director of Student Services  
Laura Batchelor - Associate Director of Student Services  
Jessica Swindle, TOSA Metzger

Sue Scott - Associate Director of Teaching and Learning  
Andy McFarlane - Director of Equity  
Katie Beckett - TOSA Literacy  
Jordan Mills - Principal  
Susan Salkield - Director of Special projects  
Kristina Kurtz - Early Learning Coordinator