

SB 428

Chief Sponsor: Sen. Frederick

Directs Secretary of State to conduct audit of use of statewide summative assessment (SBAC) in public schools in this state.

Please except this written statement as my testimony about SB 428.

As we are all aware, our schools are having huge problems right now. Public schools don't have the money needed for supplies, teachers, and staff. Classrooms have more and more students with emotional problems, students acting out at a younger age and difficulty with violence. We are not engaging students in learning. A major root of the problem is we are spending so much time and money on testing and test prep. We are teaching to the test and not teaching to learn.

I was a teacher. I loved my job, to engage my students in the love of learning. I quit because teaching stopped being about true learning and is now only about test scores. The pressure is tearing children as well as our teachers apart. All the focus and money going into a test for what? The Smarter Balanced Assessment does not give teachers useful information. Smarter Balanced Assessment does not test learning nor thinking but rote answers to pre-set views. In my last classroom, I taught 3rd grade. As is usual in many classrooms, I had a large divide on where the students were testing. I had some students reading at 7th grade level and some students reading at early 1st grade. But all of my students wanted to learn and were interested in science and the world around them. I developed a system of group internet research with everyone supporting each other to learn about topics of interest. The students were learning and developing interests and skills. My principal stopped it because 3rd grade didn't have science on the test. We could only teach reading and math, and work on test performance, not learning. Both Reading and math should be taught as tools for other learning but that is not how the Smarter Balanced Assessment is written. The students lost their joy and interest. I lost my love of teaching – because I wasn't really teaching to learn.

Smarter Balanced Assessment takes huge amounts of money that could be spent on small class-size, more staff, more supplies and a more diverse learning environment – all things our students need to learn in the 21st century. Instead we are spending huge amounts on corporations who don't even have qualifications in learning nor child development and only want to make money. Teaching to the test – a poorly written, irrelevant test - is killing our student's well-being, their joy of learning and their future which is our future. We need to audit how these tests are effecting our schools, our children and their true educational outcomes.

Thank you for your time,

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