

Members of the House Education Committee,

Members of the Oregon Public Education Network (OPEN) urge you to pass SB 1583, the bill designed to minimize some of the harmful impacts of mandated standardized testing in Oregon.

The criticisms of the test and its consequences are legion: These tests take weeks away from time for instruction; their data doesn't help teachers assess individual learning needs and challenges their students face; they create an agenda that undermines teachers taking incremental steps leading to developing skills imbedded in the curriculum; too many teachers, not wanting to be forced to teach to the test, have left the profession; they have led to students being sorted and tracked according to family income and ethnicity; precious resources have been wasted.

The 2015 federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) allows states to apply to be an "Innovative Assessment Pilot" state to develop an alternative statewide system of local assessments to meet the federal assessment requirements. Currently, New Hampshire, Louisiana, North Carolina, Georgia and Massachusetts are doing so.

Thus, a number of states have implemented a system that has made meaningful strides in freeing students and teachers from the oppressive, lifeless, and failed system of Smarter Balanced testing. Thus far, the ODE has made no meaningful efforts to take advantage of this opportunity.

Left to its own, we see no sign that the ODE has a purposeful desire for our state to create an assessment system that truly engages students; that is not stultifying in its lack of creativity; that taps and honors the innovation and passion of teachers; that actually addresses years of complaints from parents, teachers, students and taxpayers.

We have lost our way and we are mired in a failed system.

SB 1583 will direct the ODE to begin what should have been implemented in 2015 when the ESSA became law.

Please pass SB 1583 and please actively support its passage in the House.

Sincerely,

Members of the Oregon Public Education Network (OPEN) Steering Committee:

Margi Brown  
Roscoe Caron  
David Crandall  
Scott Hayes  
Gregg Heacock  
Kathleen Jeskey  
Larry Lewin  
Liz Marlia Stein  
Ross Swartzendruber  
Mary Thamann