



*serving the interests of
Connecticut school administrators
for over 35 years*

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Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischman, Senator Boucher, Representative Lavielle and distinguished members of the Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this public hearing and provide testimony to you on behalf of The Connecticut Association of School Administrators (CASA). I am here to testify regarding Raised Bill 1095 AN ACT CONCERNING STUDENTS ASSESSMENTS.

My name is Helen Alvarez Moran. As a former teacher and retired administrator in Bridgeport for the past 36 years, I welcome this opportunity to share some of the concerns most educators have regarding the educational testing requirements in Connecticut. The major concern and flaw with the testing is that it is not developmentally appropriate for students as you will hopefully see by my statements.

First of all the SBAC testing does not show where the student started the year and how they've grown. The test is not measuring mastery of information in any form. It is a 7 hour test administered in a series of days to 3-8 grade students that when compared to LSAT, SAT and other standardized high school, college and career testing is actually longer, more stressful and more time consuming. There are many components of the test that are difficult for students such as:

ELA Performance Task: Imagine an eight year old sitting at a computer, legs swinging because their feet don't touch the floor. First step is to read 2 or more passages about a topic on the computer.....(are the passages really 3rd grade readability?). Then they answer multiple choice questions and type their constructed response. Next step.....on their own, is to read a lengthy set of directions and determine whether they will write an opinion, expository, or narrative). Don't forget to flip back and forth between the 2 articles to include details from each. Note taking is on their own....then go ahead and type your essay. IF there are any questions the only thing a teacher can say is "Click on the "i" button" for information.

An actual example given to me by a teacher about a student with IEP was that the student knew she had to type something, seeing the other students in the class typing, but she wasn't sure what. Since the teacher was not allowed to give any instructions to assist her, the child began typing the ARTICLE...the student was so proud of herself asking the teacher, "Did you see how much I typed?"

This extensive testing on a computer does not reflect every day learning (paper and pencil). If students can't navigate the many tools inherent in the SBAC testing all teachers are allowed to say is, "Click on the "I" button"

Math Skills include equivalent fractions in 3rd grade. According to Jean Piaget, a developmental psychologist known for his theory of cognitive development, students of this age are not developmentally ready to address this subject matter. Children should not be taught and certainly not tested until they have reached the appropriate stage of cognitive development.

There is just too much testing mandated by the Districts and the State. Teachers in Bridgeport spent most of the months of October, January and February administering the DRA2, Aimsweb Benchmark, LAS Links, and District Performance Tasks. The month of May will be the same thing with the addition of LAU testing! Third grade is affected the most by this excessive testing cycle being caught in the middle of both K-3 testing and 3-8 testing. Where does 3rd grade belong developmentally? It's always been K-3, but the testing demands have placed increasing demands on 3rd graders who are still learning to read, think and develop their writing skills etc. We are adding too much before a firm foundation has been set and not getting any valuable information regarding student learning.

Administrators are caught in the middle of these testing demands because we are tasked with enforcing the testing mandates yet we know the testing requirements do not adequately and realistically evaluate student learning or delivery of instruction by teachers. Educators are being judged by this testing which does not reflect the developmental growth of students from the beginning of the year to the end; the love of learning and the ability of students to think and discover on their own.

I welcome the suggestions by the Connecticut Education Association to streamline our testing requirements and reduce the burdens on our students and welcome the opportunity to participate in the dialog about how to improve learning for all students and how to accurately and fairly assess educators. The current evaluation plan does not support the development of student learning nor does it accurately support the improvement of teachers and administrators in Connecticut.