

Written Testimony.

Education Committee Public Hearing.

March 17, 2015.

Regarding Bill # 1095: An Act Concerning Student Assessments

I have been a school psychologist for over 40 years in a CT public school system and I can say unequivocally that standardized testing of our students is out-of-control. The amount of time stolen from classroom instruction is excessive and amounts to a serious intrusion on student learning. Not only does the time taken to prepare students to take these yearly high-stakes assessments prevent valuable learning from taking place, but the single-minded focus on specific content expectations limits what is taught and detracts from student exploration of personal interests, creativity, energy for learning, and innovative experimentation - all the 21st Century skills that will be needed while our standardized test practices continue to wallow in 19th Century industrialized thinking. The recent controversy surrounding the purpose and efficacy of new computerized assessments has only demonstrated how outmoded this annual practice is. Teachers do not need the results from these tests to inform their instruction of students; any professional educator working with students in a classroom each day already has an excellent understanding of their students' strengths and weaknesses as a learner. The only need for such yearly standardized test results is to give an appearance of accountability and enrich test making companies. There are far more valuable ways to assess student achievement and teacher effectiveness in ensuring public accountability than to give a over-simplified snapshot assessment that has been poorly vetted, improperly developed, shrouded in secrecy, and neither established as valid nor reliable indicators of what they purport to measure. There is so much wrong with this new testing experiment that it is beyond my comprehension that thoughtful Americans would ever condone its practice, let alone impose it on their own children. How do you propose school districts explain to their students' parents that the cut-score that determines passing and failing has been purposefully set such that the majority of students will fail to live up the expectations? The entire premise is bogus, a house of cards waiting to fall.

Although many valuable dollars have already been allocated and spent on this test experiment, it should be carefully reconsidered before millions of dollars more are foolishly spent with very little to show for it in return. I implore you to stop wasting precious public financial resources on this unproven and wasteful undertaking.

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