

Dear Honorable Members of the Education Committee:

As a Connecticut Special Education Teacher, I urge you to support the proposed bill, SB380, (not oppose as I stated earlier) which will end tying teacher evaluations to the invalid SBAC test. This bill needs your support.

For one, the overwhelming research has rebutted the falsehood that the use of a standardized test is an effective means of assessing teacher performance for evaluation purposes. The American Statistical Association states that teachers, at best account for only 1-14 percent in the variance of test scores, and I'm certain in my case and those of other special educators, the effect on scores is likely even lower. Why do I say so? The SBAC is designed to fail most students because it is based on the invalid Common Core Standards, which are not based on research. Further, the SBAC is discriminatory towards my students with special needs and those who are English language learners, because the tests are not written at their instructional level, and further, each year, the amount of accommodations we can provide to these students keeps get restrained by the State. So, accommodations we use throughout the year to help level the playing field are arbitrarily ruled forbidden by the State Education Department. That is blatantly unfair. Further, no one knows exactly what the SBAC pretends to measure because its test publisher, Pearson, refuses to release test items to be studied for validity. It creates a bizarre situation in which we subject these students to two weeks of testing they cannot understand, and cannot offer any assistance. To me, this is tantamount to educational malpractice, and possibly even abuse. Not only should the SBAC be withdrawn for teacher evaluations, the State should be more proactive and stop wasting millions of taxpayers money on this worthless test altogether.

In addition, these ineffective standardized tests were not designed to demonstrate teacher performance, so how can use them for this purpose? In fact, this matter appears to be being settled in court at the state level, most recently in New Mexico, where it was ruled that using standardized tests for teacher evaluation is itself "invalid." Another issue related to this ridiculous notion is that how can SBAC be used to gauge the performance of our art, music, physical education, and language teachers, among others?

Connecticut can easily rectify this by enacting SB380. When I teach, I use scientific, research-based methods because anything less would not be acceptable for my students. Yet, it is widely known that studies demonstrate that tying a teacher's evaluation to a standardized test amounts to "junk science." Those calling for tying the SBAC to teacher evaluations have no idea how to assess teacher performance, or have a sinister ulterior motive in mind.

Sincerely,  
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