New Haven Federation of Teachers

LOCAL 933 AFL-CIO

An Affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers

David Cicarella
President

Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee,

Standardized tests have always been an important educational tool in school districts across the country. The SBAC test is no different in this regard. Standardized tests, SBAC and all others, are designed to provide data to educators. Simply stated they tell us what the students know and what they don't know. i.e. their area of strengths and weaknesses And this drives our instruction in every school district, every school building, and every classroom. However SBAC, like so many other standardized tests, were never intended to be a component in teacher evaluation. It is critical that SBAC test results are used appropriately and consistent with their very purpose. De-coupling SBAC from teacher evaluations will ensure the SBAC test results are utilized in a manner consistent with their design.

Teachers must be comprehensively evaluated. In New Haven we created district level assessments in each subject area and grade level to go along with assessments designed by teams in individual schools. These can be used in conjunction with other teacher made assessments. Our landmark contract signed in 2009 delineated we not rely on an individual test but rather use *multiple measures of assessment* to ensure we are accurately assessing student growth. Standardized tests, like the SBAC, are not part of the plethora of tests we developed for assessing student growth, as they are inappropriate for this purpose.

I understand there may be some confusion based on a short table conversation I was engaged in at a recent PEAC meeting here in Hartford. The discussion centered around teacher and administrators collaboratively arriving at Student Learning Objectives (SLO's) and the corresponding measures of assessments. We were discussing the appropriateness of the SBAC tests as it relates to TEVAL. Our conversation ended abruptly as there was a full agenda that day. While I have always been a proponent of allowing educators the opportunity to operate freely within defined and agreed upon parameters, the de-coupling of SBAC from teacher evaluation is crucial, as we need to ensure SBAC results are used as intended. There must be uniformity on this issue statewide. That is to provide data to inform and drive our instruction. Lets be certain we do not use SBAC for reasons other than for what it was created.

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