

Dear Education Committee Members--

As a public school teacher and former Board of Education member, I urge you to pass HB 5555 and SB 380. Parents should have the right to make informed decisions and have the final say as to whether their children should sit for the SBAC test. There is no compelling interest for the state to interfere with parental rights regarding testing. Unlike compelling students who attend public schools to be vaccinated, there are no safety or medical issues attending whether a child takes this test or not.

There are numerous reasons for parents to refuse to allow their children to take this test. Among them are privacy concerns due to the rollback of FERPA protections and the dubious value of a test which only provides a numerical ranking without a comprehensive scoring of the skill areas being tested.

Likewise, how are teachers to be evaluated on this simplistic scoring? Students aren't being tracked by cohort so every year may yield a different evaluation score which may depend heavily on the ability level of students. Teachers who have more ELL or special needs students may suffer in any given year. Moreover, there is nothing in the scoring of the test to indicate areas where students struggle and where they are strong. This makes the test worthless as a guide to help teachers to focus on the needs of individual students. I urge you to support these bills.

Sincerely,

Martin H. Walsh
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