

Dear Representatives,

I am a parent of a 4th grader in the Tigard/Tualatin School District. Last year I became aware of the Smarter Balanced Assessment test when our district chose our 3rd graders (my son's grade) to be the test subjects of the new sample test, Smarter Balance. I was taken by surprise as I was unaware of this test and quickly learned of the implementation of the new Common Core standards and how this will drastically change how my son will be taught, learn and test.

I am writing to you as a parent who has been very involved in her children's education (I have a 22 year old and a 20 year old, Katey, and Katey has a learning disability. Katey and I worked with Senator Courtney in 2012 to pass SB 3, eradicating the label Mental Retardation out of the school statutes as a label for a student on an IEP). My concern is that my right, as a parent, to opt out my son from the Smarter Balance test is now taken from me and other families that are not in support of this test, the way it has been written, the flaws in the test, and the unsupported data that a test, federally written, is better for our children than what we can do with OUR teachers in OUR state.

I support this bill because it is about our rights as parents to make decisions that are best for our children. Common Core has blindsided parents, myself being one of them. Common Core, as standards, are the problem it is the curriculum and testing that I have issue with as it has caused many nights of frustration and argument in our home. It has taken a young man from wanting a career in STEM to not wanting to do his math and our inability to understand all the "extra" work involved in solving a problem such as 3×4 . This test is flawed in many ways, some of the sample questions I ran across were worded incorrectly like the phrase "use these data" in a 4th grade level math question. If a child cannot answer a question they cannot move on or skip the question nor can they go back to the question later, they have to provide an answer wrong or right they have to guess. How does that measure anything, if they guess right a few times it moves their level up until they get it wrong, some kids can guess well, as in the case of my daughter. Her results, in 7th grade (this type of testing was used to find her levels in math and reading) were all over the place BECAUSE she guessed well. For me, it was a false positive as to where she really had ability in those subjects.

I am asking that you carefully consider the rights of the parents, who DO love their children and who DO know what is best for them. Educators and Parents need to make these decisions together, not the federal or state government mandate. Schools all work differently and need the freedom to do what is right for their local district.

I encourage you to read some articles I have listed, one from 2012 when Common Core first started to surface and from several educators that I have provided.

<http://edexcellence.net/commentary/education-gadfly-daily/common-core-watch/2012/do-the-smarter-balanced-released-assessment-items-measure-up.html>

http://www.oregonlive.com/opinion/index.ssf/2014/10/why_my_kids_will_not_take_the.html

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/ed/2014/12/29/371918272/the-man-behind-common-core-math>