

Members of the Senate Education Committee -

I am writing in support of SB 428 which specifies certain aspects of the Smarter Balanced Assessment system be subject to audit by the Secretary of State.

Many Oregonians have become very concerned about how much time and how many financial and human resources are being spent on the Smarter Balanced Assessment system. This resulted in a bill for an audit in 2015, which was completed in 2016.

That audit was woefully inadequate to measure what those of us who worked to pass the original audit bill. To my knowledge, not a single Oregon school district was asked to submit information to the audit as to how much staff time, nor how much instructional time, is being devoted to this assessment. My experience as a classroom teacher was that the amount of time and focus devoted to the assessment far outweighs its value as an instrument to inform instruction. I also believe that it outweighs its value as an instrument to inform for accountability. In addition to this letter, I have also submitted an article entitled "14 Days SBAC Took Away" into testimony. It is by a Portland 6th grade teacher. It is very similar in many ways to my experience of the weeks of testing in my school in a 6th grade in Canby.

Many districts have made purchases of interim assessments that are now required in addition to SBAC to measure progress towards passing that assessment. Recently I had the opportunity to meet up with teachers from my district to discuss the school year. They are incredibly frustrated with all the testing required in their classrooms. A math teacher from the high school had done the math and figured that between the district purchased interim assessment and his students are now spending 16% of their total instructional time on SBAC and practice assessments for SBAC. Fifth grade is one of the most tested grade levels of all. A fifth grade teacher had also done the math and determined that between Smarter Balanced, the interim assessments, and all the other state assessments required at fifth grade that her instructional time was being diminished by 25%.

The focus and expenditure of effort and resources on this one assessment is inappropriate and we deserve to have an audit that fully and properly investigates that. Please pass SB 428.

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