

Thank you Chair Wagner, Vice-Chair Thomsen and members of the Committee.

My name is Betsy Salter and I'm the proud parent of Maggie, a 2018 PPS graduate who is now a First Year UO Duck.

Maggie went to pre-school in SE Portland and started in PPS as a Kindergartner in our neighborhood schools.

I have only praise for our teachers and school administrators from start to finish.

We were lucky to be in the Oregon public school system before the ODE and PPS became illogically obsessed with standardized testing at the expense of providing our children with a well rounded and whole child learning experience.

From 3rd - 6th grade, I didn't give much thought to the OAKS testing for science, reading, writing and math. At some point **I'd get a card notifying me that Maggie** had attained a score in each subject and was labeled **"Exceeds Expectations"** and **post it on our refrigerator** but was not curious enough to ask the teachers what the score meant. **I relied on teacher feedback** based on their review of Maggie's classroom work and behavior **to know how she was doing in school.**

Around 6th grade I became concerned with Governor Kitzhaber's and the Legislature's efforts to reform our public education system: more centralization at the state level, lot's of talk about "return on investment" and "accountability", more unfunded educational mandates in an already shamefully underfunded public education system...

After extensive research I learned that the state standardized tests (then OAKS, now SBA), were inherently biased against children of color and low income children and as a result, invalid for the purpose of measuring the so-called “achievement gap.”

The standardized tests also waste scarce taxpayer funds and valuable instructional time in a state that has one of the shortest school years in the nation.

I learned that schools with low test scores were being punished with additional top down mandates, for example double-dosing low scoring students in reading and math at the expense of recess, art or music and additional training for teachers which meant students spent more time with substitutes.

I learned that opting out of the state standardized tests was a way I could protest against this unjust educational malpractice and hopefully nudge Oregon to be a national leader in ending or at least substantially scaling back their use of annual standardized tests to label and punish children and schools.

My husband and I started opting Maggie out when she was in 7th grade. I asked if she wanted to opt out in case she didn't want to do anything different from her peers. Even though she had always exceeded expectations, she hated the stress of taking the state standardized tests and was eager to opt out.

We wrote a 2 page letter explaining all my reasons for opting out (more than mentioned in my testimony today) and I talked to our school principal and teachers. **Opting out was a burgeoning movement in Oregon at that time so I was gratefully treated with respect and collaboration in figuring out how Maggie would spend her time learning while her peers were being tested.**

The same held true for 8th grade and again in 11th grade. **By the time Maggie started high school our Principal was integrating graduation Essential Skills work samples into general education classes. ES work samples are one way to graduate without taking or passing the SBA tests or losing electives by having to take a special Essential Skills class when you are a Senior because you failed or opted out of the SBA as a Junior.**

Between passing other OPTIONAL college prep standardized tests (e.g., PSAT, ACT, AP..) and successfully completing work samples in her general ed math and ELA classes, Maggie had met her ES graduation requirements before 11th grade - so the opt out decision was obvious.

Maggie graduated with honors in June 2018 and made the UO Dean's List her first term this school year, despite not having taken an OAKS or SBA test since 6th grade.

At the summer parent orientation before this school year started, it struck me at how all the UO presenters made a point of saying college is not like high school. To paraphrase, in college students are not going to be "fed" information and expected to regurgitate it. In college students will be expected to be curious and consider alternative ways to come up with valid responses to inquiries.

Opting out of Oregon K -12 annual State Standardized tests may be one of my proudest child rearing decisions, but I came to that decision after extensive research and networking with other activist parents.

Most public school parents don't have the luxury of time that it took me to weigh my options and make an informed decision on what was best for my student.

SB 433 is intended to level that playing field so that ALL Oregon parents and adult students can decide how best to maximize their learning opportunities and prepare for college or career.

SB 433 would prohibit ODE, School District and School Administrators and teachers from bullying and misinforming parents and students in order to discourage them from opting out of state standardized tests.

I am also submitting this testimony in support of SB 428 and SB 456.

Thank you.