

Dear Chair Dembrow and members of the Senate Education Committee,

RE: Opposition to SB 596

I join the outcry against inappropriate, broad scale, high stakes standardized testing in our schools. You will hear much appropriately concerned testimony on this issue. But SB 596 throws the baby out with the bathwater.

As a clinical psychologist working in schools for decades, I have tested thousands of students over the years. My rules for testing anyone are:

1. Does the testing give us actionable information that directly affects the individual we are testing?
2. Is the information valid and reliable?
3. Can the testing help me identify strengths that can be emphasized and built on?

SB 606 which you are also considering today addresses the need to thoughtfully look at the role of standardized testing in our schools. It is a necessary precursor to the draconian solution proposed in SB596. I can support a limit on state imposed testing because this cannot reflect the curriculum or methods of individual school districts. However, I oppose the limit on school districts using appropriate instruments to assure the best education for every student.

Teachers practice essential formal and informal assessment every day in their classrooms. But tests that would be eliminated with SB 596 also play a role when thoughtfully administered, interpreted, and applied. They:

1. Fill in the gaps from educators' lack of knowledge about assessment and lack of time to create meaningful assessments.
2. Allow equitable individual instruction by letting educators look at within group differences. (This is not an administrator saying that a certain diverse group seems to be learning less. Rather it is a teacher looking at an individual student compared to other students with comparable life experiences and seeing the individual strengths and challenges for this particular student.)
3. Keep students from falling through the inevitable cracks in a complex classroom setting. For instance:
 - a. The quiet student who has good social skills, but is not learning as expected.

- b. The student whose social behaviors distract from attention to real learning difficulties.
- c. The bright student who has real gaps but who compensates well enough to appear at least average.

in addition, we are learning increasingly about the role in early learning of such things as phonemic awareness. Being able to reliably and validly identify every student's strengths in such areas provides the building blocks for achievement in later grades.

Thank you for your service and attention,

Carol Greenough, Ph.D.
Retired clinical psychologist