

**Testimony on HB 1583  
Committee on Education  
Oregon House of Representatives  
February 22, 2022**

Dr. Gordon Lafer

Chair Alonso Leon, Vice-Chairs Neron and Weber, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Gordon Lafer. I am an elected member of the school board for the Eugene 4J school district. I am also a professor at the University of Oregon and a fellow with the National Education Policy Center.

Every year that I have been on the school board, the board has stated that one of our goals is to reduce the amount of time spent on standardized tests. Some testing is useful. But the excessive amount of testing we have steals precious time away from classroom education, forces teachers and students to narrow their learning to a focus on the material they think will be on the test (or even worse, just to test-taking "strategies"), and often provides little useful information to students, parents or teachers. It is not uncommon to hear that students spend up to 15 days per year preparing for or taking standardized tests that have little to do with what they spend the rest of the year learning. At a time when our district is working hard to make up for snow days and otherwise ensure maximal instructional minutes for our students, we are wasting too many of those minutes on testing that is not, in reality, educational.

The goal of reducing the time spent on standardized testing is shared by the Board, the Superintendent, senior district administrators, principals and teachers. Yet we are limited in what we can do, due to state and federal mandates. Everything that state legislators can do to relax or minimize these mandates will be to the great benefit of our students.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this testimony.

Gordon Lafer  
Member, Board of Directors  
Eugene 4J School District