

Submitter: Louisa Roberts

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1555

Despite decades of standardized testing, statewide academic outcomes remain modest. These challenges are not solved by additional test preparation.

In Portland, public schools are already facing significant budget shortfalls driven by rising costs and limited funding. When resources are stretched this thin, increased emphasis on testing often comes at the expense of what students actually need to thrive: stable staffing, mental health and behavioral supports, arts and electives, and time for meaningful instruction and relationship-building.

Research consistently shows that high-stakes testing pressures narrow the curriculum, reducing time spent on science, social studies, the arts, physical education, and recess. It also increases stress for students and teachers alike. Teaching to a test may improve test-taking skills, but it does not teach children how to think critically, collaborate, solve problems, or engage deeply with ideas.

Instead of doubling down on test-driven instruction, I urge policymakers to prioritize:

- Safe and welcoming schools
- Strong teacher-parent partnerships
- Reasonable, developmentally appropriate expectations
- Instruction that allows for deeper learning, creativity, and critical thinking

Standardized tests can be one data point, but they should not be the driver of instruction. Our children deserve schools that support the whole child and prepare them for life—not just for a test.

Thank you for your time and consideration.