

Testimony on House Bill 239, Ella Eichenberg, Rising Seventh Grader, Toledo Early College

Imagine sitting in the back of a classroom, trying so hard to complete a task that feels impossible. Your friends finished the task a while ago, and this is bringing your brain to an infinite amount of questions. *Am I dumb? Am I simply not good enough? Why me? Why not the person next to me? When will this be over?* You stare at the computer screen, and you think about how many questions you have gotten wrong already. You weren't prepared for this test enough. Your teachers tried so hard to help you succeed, and you don't want to let them down. You may have aced the tests and pop quizzes your teachers gave you throughout the year, but at this point, nothing matters except for completing this test. You won't get the results back until a matter of months, and sometimes you may not even get the results back. I strongly believe that we should reduce state testing in Ohio because of the stress it puts on students, the unclear questions, and the fact that it does not benefit the teachers or the students.

Firstly, teachers' jobs aren't only to educate their students, but to prepare them for their futures. It is simply impossible to prepare a child for their future, when they are being buried in stress and pressure. As a student myself, I know how much stress a child can and cannot bear. Some students are very fortunate, and others are not. They may grow up just as their parents had, wondering if food will be served at dinner tonight. By adding more stress to the situation, we are doing nothing to help them. In fact, we are doing the opposite of helping them. A report released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention clearly states that around 7.5% of children from age three to seventeen have been diagnosed with anxiety. This number may seem small, but who are we leaving out of the equation? We are leaving out the fact that the less fortunate do not have the money for being tested for anxiety. A life of poverty often results in stress and anxiety. So truly, this number does not prove that most children don't deal with anxiety, it proves that at least 4.4 million do.

Additionally, the questions themselves may have clear answers to most students, but that is only when the questions are simplified. Quite a few students most likely know the answer to the questions, but the questions are put in a context that makes them at least ten times more difficult. For example, if you were to ask a kindergartener, "Do like blue or green?" they might have a clear answer. If you were to ask a kindergartener the question, "Do you prefer the color navy over the color olive?" they would not be able to make sense of the question. This provides an idea of how state testing in Ohio is built upon making questions harder than they really are. Giving a student a tough question to answer is one thing, but intentionally confusing a student is something we shouldn't stand for.

Finally, do state tests even benefit the student? As a student, I don't get the test results back for a matter of months, and by that time, it is the very next school year. The state tests do not help students improve because the results are not given back in time

for educational improvement. We have to realize our problems before we try to fix them, and Ohio State Testing makes that impossible. The teacher also is not benefitted. They cannot provide a better guiding hand, when they don't know what exactly to guide. For example, when I took the 2019 OSTs in the spring, I did not get the results back until September of 2019. It took around five months for me to get my test results back. It should not even take a month for me to get my test scores back, but yet again Ohio state testing did not work as it should have.

In conclusion, we need to reduce all unnecessary testing to the minimal amount required. I urge this because students don't have a say in what is forced upon them. To many students, the questions on the screen don't feel like they are meant to test the child but are made to break the child. Why are students forced to take a test that does not benefit them or anyone around them positively? The answer to that question is that they shouldn't be. This test only inflicts negative outcomes on the student taking it. If you want your own answer to that question, then you have to listen to students and put yourself in their shoes. If you ask a student about their opinion on the subject, they might just say the OSTs are the most dreadful time of the school year. As an accelerated rising seventh grader, my teachers have anticipated for me to take ninth grade math in the upcoming school year. I have gotten three perfect scores on Ohio State Testing before, but that is rare. If I deal with the stress levels used as an example, how do you think other students' stress levels compare to mine? Changes need to be made, and reducing state testing is one of them.

Ella Eichenberg
2047 Sherwood Ave
Toledo OH 43614
ellaeichenberg@gmail.com