

On May 2nd, I attended the South-Western City School District Employee Awards. That night, I was one of over 10 people to be recognized for being members of the elite group who have earned top 100 scores on the RESA summative assessment over the past 3 years. We were on stage for only a few minutes, but during that time, between handshakes and smiling for the cameras, we all engaged in a heated conversation about how detrimental the RESA summative assessment was to our teaching. We all felt that we were markedly worse teachers during our testing year and we saw this negatively impact not just our own lives, but the lives and educations of our students. Our students are why we teach. This program's summative assessment, however, hurt our students, and we will not stand for that.

During our testing years, our students suffered. Instead of doing organic, informal assessments to gauge learning in a low-stress environment, students were subjected to constant stressful, formal assessments. Instead of adjusting our content-delivery to best serve our students' needs, we sped through units, not pausing to reteach when necessary. Instead of showing students the respect and compassion they deserve, we invaded their privacy with lesson-filming. These factors not only hurt our students academically, but hurt them socially and emotionally as well. We all saw students struggle with anxiety over assessments and discomfort at the thought strangers watching videos of them. We watched as our students feel less and less like important, cared-for individuals and more and more like lab rats. Our students are the reason we teach, and this program hurt them as much as it hurt us.

Let me be clear, this conversation took place between some of the best new teachers in the state. It took place between teachers who were invited to be honored at the statehouse for our achievement on the RESA summative assessment. Teachers who are fighting for the elimination of this summative assessment aren't doing so because we're afraid we won't pass. We're fighting because we want what's best for our students. We hope you do too.