

I am Kara Jankowski and I am an English as a Second Language teacher in West Carrollton, Ohio. In light of our current situation, House Bill 67 is essential for students, families and educators. My experience in the classroom, especially this past year has shown me state testing in this situation is not appropriate for our students.

All teachers know assessments are an integral part of providing high-quality instruction. I use assessment data every day when working with my students. For example, I might give a spelling assessment, analyze the data and can see a student is having difficulty writing words that follow a consonant-vowel-consonant-E pattern. Using this data, I create individualized lessons and work specifically on that skill. Then, I give an assessment to see if the student has mastered the skill and the cycle continues.

Teachers use a variety of assessments on an on-going basis. Every time we work with a student, we are observing and assessing their learning. We give formative and summative assessments with the latter being a comprehensive look at their achievement on a certain topic or skill, usually at the end of a unit or lesson. Teachers also conduct ongoing diagnostic assessments throughout the year where we assess and analyze student growth throughout the school year. We also tend to keep portfolios with evidence of student learning.

Typically, districts also use diagnostic assessments. In my school, we use two different diagnostic tests for math and reading. They are given three times a year and generally take two hours, although I have had students who take quite a bit longer. ‘

English learner students like mine also take the OELPA test, a language proficiency test which consists of four separate state tests on the computer in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

It is evident the problem is not that students are being under-tested. Clearly, teachers are continually providing ongoing, developmentally-appropriate assessments to their students. The glaring problem remains that state achievement tests do not provide teachers with actionable data they need to inform instruction. Results do not arrive until summer. While state testing uses a significant amount of instructional time and resources, it offers teachers and administrators no useful data for instruction.

For my fourth and fifth grade students, this bill would mean more time for learning with high-quality lessons focused specifically on the needs of the student using classroom assessment data. Students are already assessed in developmentally-appropriate ways in the context of their classroom lessons which is aligned with the Ohio Learning Standards. By not requiring state testing, students are freed from high-stakes stressful assessment to instead focus on the assessment in their own classroom that reflects their actual, in-school learning, providing teachers with actionable data to inform future instruction.