

Good afternoon Chair Manning, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson and Members of the Committee:

My name is Erin Stevens and I am a teacher in the Pickerington Local School District. I have 18 years of teaching experience as an intervention specialist 15 years being at the high school level.

I am here today to offer testimony in support of HB 73, the Testing Reduction Act. As an Intervention Specialist, testing is what we call the fifth season in our building. We have testing for our yearly IEPs, three year re-evaluations of students, Common Assessment testing twice a year in subjects that are not OST tested areas, OST tests (up to 7 tests for students if they are not re-testing in subjects), and the currently mandated ACT testing for Juniors. If students are in AP classes, they also have those tests. In order to schedule all of this testing, we begin in April and go through the last day of school in May due to make up tests, for a total of 60 school days of lost instructional time due to mandated/unmandated testing. This year, we have had i-Ready, ALEKS, OELPA, ACT, Common Assessments, OST, PSAT, and AP testing that have been used as various measures of student ability. The 60 days of lost instructional time is greater than the current 2% cap that is current law. This is an increase in my district of 12 additional days of testing over the last two years. The efforts to “reduce” testing has created more testing, paperwork, documentation for educators and more stress for students and impossibly changing guidelines and requirements for parents to follow.

With special education and high stakes testing, most of my students are in multiple categories (low socioeconomic, EL, multiracial, and special education). For these students, being out of class for up to 60 days creates a compounded problem of them missing instructional time after coming back from hybrid learning during this pandemic, just for the purpose of testing. For those taking or re-taking tests such as OST or ACT that affect graduation points or in the case of ACT that could be used for the current alternate pathway, or course grades that affect the new graduation seals, a teacher is now forced to look at where the priority should be placed. These timeframes all also fall within days of each other, which does not give these students much time to have time to prepare/recover from the mass amount of testing. When we’ve been asked to look at the whole child and focus on Social Emotional Learning, the emphasis on ensuring that our students have not just been brought back into the schools from hybrid or remote learning for the sole purpose of being made to take standardized tests or to take tests so that districts have data feels like it is an empty promise at this point.

The pressure to perform and do well is not lost on students. While proctoring this spring, you are held to strict standards and protocols to follow for your specific group of students. I had a student that had to come to the school for the first time this year because they have been virtual all year and will continue to remain so after testing. The student did not know where to report for testing and was so upset they didn’t know where to go and the test would start without them. They began to cry and another teacher noticed them and found out what the problem was. They were able to help them find my testing location. This is just part of the pressure that students have felt about State Testing. Due to the fact that as a proctor you must stick to the script, you

cannot say anything to any student. I was able to let the student go to the bathroom after explaining where it was and let them start it on time with the rest of the group. I could not offer any additional support to this student.

By reducing the state mandated standardized tests and allowing educator and district workgroups to determine best practices in order to reduce the amount of time spent on testing is what is necessary. This allows districts to continue to do further research in order to determine what works best for its students and to provide more time on instruction and more time for intervention.

I urge you to vote for HB 73 and the provisions that Representative Manning and Representative Crawley have outlined. I thank you for your time and your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erin Stevens', with a stylized, cursive script.

Erin Stevens